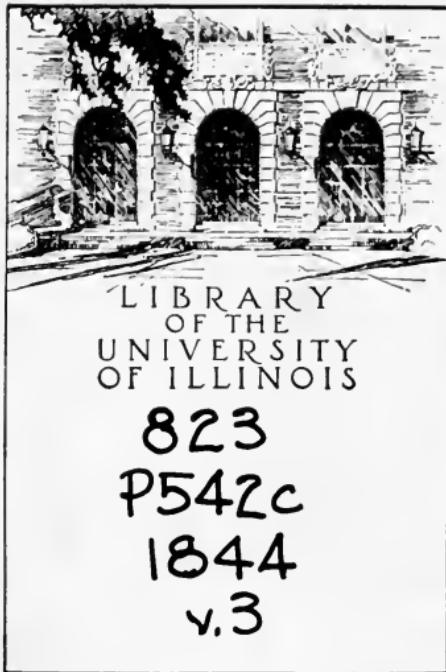


*AmCopeland*







CALEB STUKEY.

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# CALEB STUKELY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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## CALEB STUKEY.

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### PART XI.

#### THE REVULSION.

“ He was a man  
Who stole the livery of the court of heav’n  
To serve the devil in. \* \* \* \* \*  
In holy phrase transacted villanies  
That common sinners durst not meddle with.”

POLLOK’S *Course of Time*.

“ *Cardinal Wolsey*—For holy offices I have a time; a time  
To think upon the part of business.”

*Henry VIII.*

“ *The companion of the wise shall be wise.*” A six months’ residence with the religious and self-renouncing minister could not be without its effect on the character and disposition of the disciple, newly released from sin and care, and worldly calamity. The bright example of a good man is much—that of a good and *beloved* man is more. I was bound to Mr Clayton by every tie that can endear a man to man, and rivet the ready heart of youth in truthful and confiding love. I regarded my preserver with a higher feeling than a

fond son may bear towards the mere author and maintainer of his existence. For Mr Clayton, whose smallest praise it was that he had restored to me my life, in addition to a filial love, I had all the reverence that surpassing virtue claims, and lowly piety constrains. Months passed over our head, and I was still without occupation, though still encouraged by my kind friend to look for a speedy termination to my state of dependence. Painful as the thought of separation had become to Mr Clayton, my situation was far from satisfactory to myself. I knew not another individual with whom I could have established myself under similar circumstances. The sense of obligation would have been oppressive, the conviction that I was doing wrong intolerable to sustain; but the simplicity, the truth, the affectionate warmth of my benevolent host, lightened my load day after day, until I became at last insensible to the burden. At this period of my career, the character of Mr Clayton appeared to me bright and fixed as a spotless star. He seemed the pattern of a man, pure and perfect. The dazzling light of pious fervour consumed within him the little selfishness that nature, to stamp an angel with humanity, had of necessity implanted there. He was swallowed up in holiness—his thoughts were of heaven—his daily conduct tinged and illumined with a heavenly hue. Nothing could surpass the intense devotedness of the child of God, except perhaps the self-renunciation, and the profound humility which distinguished

him in the world, and in his conversation amongst men. “*The companion of the wise shall be wise.*” I observed my benefactor, and listened to his eloquence; I pondered on his habitual piety, until, roused to enthusiasm by the contemplation of the matchless being, I burned to follow in his glorious course, to revolve in the same celestial orbit, the most distant and the meanest of his satellites. The hand of Providence was traceable in every act, which, in due course, and step by step, had brought me to the minister. It could not be without a lofty purpose that I had been plucked a brand, as it were, from the burning; it was not an aimless love that snatched me from death to life—from darkness to mid-day light—from the depths of despondency to the heights of serenity and joy. It was that I might glorify the hand that had been outstretched on my behalf, that I might carry His name abroad, proclaim his wondrous works, sing aloud his praises, and in the face of men give honour to the everlasting Giver of all good. It was for this and these that I had been selected from mankind, and made the especial object of a Father’s grace. I believed it in all the simplicity and ingenuousness of a mind awakened to a sense of religion and human responsibility. I could not do otherwise. From the moment that I was convinced of the obligation under which I had been brought, that I could feel the force of the silent compact which had been effected between the unseen Power and my own soul, it would have been

as easy for me to annihilate thought, to prevent its miraculous presence in the mind, as to withstand the urgent prickings of my conscience. I believed in my divine summons, and I was at once ready, vehement, and impatient to obey it. Had I followed the dictates of my will, I would have walked through the land, and preached aloud the wonderful mercies of God, imploring my fellow-creatures to repentance, and directing them to the fount of all their blessings and all their happiness. I would have called upon men to turn from error and dangerous apathy, before their very strongholds. Powerful in the possession of truth, I would have thundered the saving words before their market-places and exchanges—at the very fortresses in which the world deems itself chiefly secure, with Mammon at its head, Satan's chief lieutenant. I would have called around me the neglected and the poor, and in the highways and in the fields disclosed to them the tenderness and loving-kindness that I had found, that they might feel in all their fulness, if they would turn from sin, and place their trust in Heaven. It was pain and anguish to be silent. Not for my own sake did I yearn to speak. Oh no ! There was nothing less than a love of self in the panting desire that I felt to break the selfish silence. It was the love of souls that pressed me forward, and the confidence that the good news which it was my privilege to impart would find in every bosom a welcome as warm and ready as it would prove to be

effectual. To walk abroad in silence, feeling myself to be the depositary of a celestial revelation, and believing that to communicate it to mankind would be to ensure their participation in its benefits, was hardly to be borne. There was not a man whom I encountered in the street, to whom I did not secretly wish to turn, and to pour into his ear the accents of peace and consolation; not one whom I did not regard as a witness against me on that great day of trial, when every man shall be judged according to his opportunities. I spoke to Mr Clayton. He encouraged the feeling by which I was actuated, but he dissuaded me from the manifestation of it in the form which I proposed.

“There was no doubt,” he said, “that every place was consecrated where truth was spoken, and the Spirit made itself apparent. No one could deny it. Much fruit, he did believe, might follow the sowing of the seed, whose hand soever scattered it. Still there were other and nearer roads to the point I aimed at. There were the sick and the needy around us—many of his own congregation—with whom I might reciprocate sweet comfort, and at whose bedside I might administer the balm that should serve them in the hardest hour of their extremity. It should be his office to conduct me to their humble habitations; it would be unspeakable joy to him to behold me well and usefully employed.”

And it was with eagerness that I accepted the

touching invitation. I was not loth or slow to take advantage of it. To serve mankind, to evince my gratitude for mercies great and undeserved, was all I asked. To know that I had gratified my wish, was peace itself. Highly as I had estimated the character of Mr Clayton, I had yet to learn his real value. I had yet to behold him the dispenser of comfort and contentment in the hovels of the wretched and the stricken—to see the leaden eye of disease grow bright at his approach, and the scowl of discontent and envious repining dissolve into equanimity, or mould itself in smiles. I had yet to see him the kind and patient companion of the friendless and the slighted—slighted, because poor; the untired listener to long tales of misery—so miserable, that they who told them could not track their dim beginnings, or fix the time in distant childhood when wretchedness was not. I had yet to find him standing at the beggar's pallet, giving encouragement, inciting hope, and adding to the counsel of a guide the solid evidences of a brother's love. With what a zeal did I attempt to follow in my patron's steps—with what enthusiasm did I begin the course which his sanction had legalized and rendered holy—and how, without a doubt as to my title, or a reflection on the propriety of the step, impelled by religious fervour, did I assume the tone and authority of a teacher, and arrogate to myself the right of determining the designs of the Omnipotent, and of appointing the degree of holy warmth, below which

no believer could be sure of forgiveness and salvation !

In no transaction of my life have I ever been more sincere—have I acted with a more decided assurance of the justice and necessity of the task, than at this critical moment of my career. If Divine goodness had not been specially vouchsafed to me, it was not that the conviction of my appointment was not as clear and firm as the liveliest impressions of the inmost heart could make it. To labour for the souls of the poor—to teach them their obligations—to point out to them the way of safety—it was this view of my delegated office that raised me to ecstasy, and compelled from me the strangest ebullitions of passion. I pronounced the change in my habits of thought to be “the dawning of the day, and the sudden rising of the day-star in my heart ;” and, dwelling with intensity on my future labours, I could exclaim, with trembling emotion,—“Oh, the exceeding excellency and glory and sweetness of the work ! The smile of Heaven is upon it—the emphatic testimony of my own conscience approves and hallows it.” I reflect at this moment with wonder upon the almost supernatural ardour and devotion by which I was elevated and abased when I first became thoroughly convinced of my mission, and declared aloud that my only business now upon earth was that of the lowest and readiest of servants, whose joy consists in the pleasure of their Master. The strangeness, the excitement that accom-

panied the adoption of my new character, had nearly overthrown me. Wild with gladness, before I visited a human being, I took a journey of some twenty miles from the metropolis. I do not remember now the name of the village at which I stopped, from which I hurried, and whose fields I scoured with the design of finding some covert, unfrequented spot, where I might unmolested and unobserved pour forth the prayers and hymns of praise with which my surcharged heart was teeming. Until nightfall I remained there, nor did I leave the place until calmly and deliberately I begged permission to devote myself to the glory and honour of Him, whose favoured child I was. I walked a few miles on my return homeward. I passed a church, that in the stillness of night reared its dark form, and seemed, solemnly and pensively, like a thing of life, to stand before me. The moon rose at its full over the venerable wall, and scattered its bright cool light across the tall and moss-grown windows. Oh ! every thing in life that wonderous night stirred up my soul to pious resolutions, and gave a wing to thought that could not find repose but in the silent and eternal sky.

The impetuosity with which I entered upon my scheme of usefulness, forbade preparation of any kind, had I not believed that any previous qualification was not essential to my purpose ; or, if essential, had been miraculously implanted in me. I was soon called upon to make my first visitation. Never will it be forgotten.

It was to the workhouse. Mr Clayton had been called thither by an old communicant, of whom he had not heard before for years. "He was ill, and he desired to speak with his still beloved minister."

Such was the message which reached my friend at the moment of his quitting his abode, on an errand of still greater urgency. "Go, Caleb," said Mr Clayton, "visit and comfort the poor sufferer; and may grace accompany your first labour of love." I proceeded to the place, and, arriving there, was ushered into a small close room—to recoil at once from the scene of misery which was there presented. Lying, with his hat and clothes upon the bed, dying, was the man himself; his wife was busy in the room, cleaning it, quietly and indifferently, as though the sleep of healthy life had closed her partner's eye, and nothing worse. On the threshold was a girl, the daughter of them both, twenty years of age or more, *an idiot*, for she laughed outright when I approached her. I had come to the house with my heart full of precious counsel, and yearning to communicate the message with which I knew myself to be charged. But in a moment I was brought to earth, shocked by the sight which I beheld, wounded in my nature, and I had not a word to say. The hardened woman looked at me for a moment, and calling me to myself by the act, I mentioned the name of Mr Clayton, and was again silent.

"What! can't he come, sir?" asked the beldam. "Well, it don't much matter. It's all over with 'un,

I fear. Come, Jessie, can't you speak to the gentleman? What can you make of her, sir?"

The daughter looked at me again, and sickened me with her unmeaning laughter. I remembered the object of my visit, and struggled for composure. Had I become a recreant so quickly? Had I not a word to say for my Master? Nothing to offer the needy creatures, perishing perhaps of spiritual want? Alarmed at my own apathy, and eager to throw it off, I turned to the poor girl, and spoke to her. I asked her many questions before I could command attention. She could only look at me wildly, blush, laugh, and make strange motions to her mother. At length I said—

"Tell me, Jessie—tell your friend—who came into the world to save sinners?"

"Him, him, him!" she answered hastily, and gabbled as before.

"Ah!" said the mother, "the poor cretur does sometimes talk about religion, but it's very seldom, and uncertain like, and I can't help her either."

"Let me read to *you*," said I.

"Lor' bless you, sir," she answered, "it wouldn't do me no good. I am too old for that. Now, get out of the way there—do, you simpleton," she added, turning to the idiot; "just let me pass—don't you see I am wanting to fetch up water."

She left the room immediately, and her daughter ran after her, screaming a wild and piercing note. I

moved to the dying man. He was insensible to any thing I could say. Fretted and ashamed of myself, I hurried from the house, and, returning home, rushed to my room, fell upon my knees, and implored my Father to inflict at once the punishment due to luke-warmness and apostasy. How vain had been all my previous desire to distinguish myself—how arrogant my pretensions—how inefficient my weak attempts ! I was not worthy of the commission with which I had been invested, and I besought Heaven to degrade the wretch who could not speak at the seasonable moment, and to bestow it upon one worthier of its love, and abler to perform his duty. I passed a miserable night of remorse, and bitter self-accusation, and in the morning was distracted by the battling feelings that were marshalled against each other in my soul. Now, a sense of my unworthiness was victorious over every other thought, and I resolved to resign my trust, and think of it no more ; then the belief in my election, the animating thought that I was chosen, and must still go forward or stand condemned, hated by myself, rejected by my God ;—this gained the mastery next, and I was torn by sore perplexity. I appealed to my benefactor. As usual, balm was on his lips, and I found encouragement and support.

“ I was yet young in the faith,” he said, “ and the abundance of heavenly grace was not yet manifested. It would come in due time ; and, in the meanwhile,

I must persevere, and a blessing would unquestionably follow."

Much more he added, to reconcile me to the previous day's defeat, and to animate me to new trials. Never did I so much need incentive and upholding; never before had I esteemed the value of a spiritual counsellor and friend.

In a small cottage, distant about three miles from the residence of Mr Clayton, there lodged, at this time, an old man, with his sister, a blind woman about seventy years of age. He had communicated with Mr Clayton's church for many years. He was now poor, and had retired from the metropolis to the hut, for the advantage of purer air, and in the hope of prolonging the short span within which his earthly life had been brought. To this humble habitation I was directed by Mr Clayton.

"The woman," said the minister, "is without any comfortable hope; but the prospects of the brother are satisfactory and most cheering. Go to the benighted woman. Hers is a melancholy case. Satan has a secure footing in her heart, and defeats every effort and every motive that I have brought to bear against it. May you be more fortunate—may her self-deceived and hardened spirit melt before the force and earnestness of your appeals!"

I ventured for a second time on sacred and interdicted ground, and visited the cottage. The unhappy

woman, to whom I had specially come, was smitten indeed. She was blind and paralyzed, and on the extreme verge of eternity. Yet, afflicted as she was, and as near to death as the living may be, she enjoyed the tranquillity and the gentleness of a child, ignorant of sin, and, in virtue of her infancy, confident of her inheritance. I could discover no evidence of a creature alarmed with a sense of guilt, loathing itself, conscious of its worthlessness. Her nature, in truth, seemed to have usurped a sweetness and placidity, the possession of which, as Mr Clayton afterwards observed, was justifiable only in those who could find nothing but vileness and depravity in every thought and purpose of their hearts.

It was a beautiful day in summer, and Margaret was sitting before the cottage porch, feeling the sun's benevolent warmth, and tempering, with the closed lid, the hot rays that were directed to her sightless orbs. She had no power to move, and was happy in the still enjoyment of the lingering and lovely day. She might have been a statue for her quietness—but there were curves and lines in the decrepit frame that art could never borrow. Little there seemed about her to induce a love of life, and yet a countenance more bright with cheerfulness and mild content I never met. The healthy and the young might read a lesson on her blanched and wrinkled cheek. Full of my errand, I did not hesitate at once to engage her mind on heavenly and holy topics. She did not, or

she would not, understand me. I spoke to her of the degradation of humanity, our fallen nature, and the impossibility of thinking any thing but sin—and a stone could not be more senseless than the aged listener.

“ Was I sure of it ? ” she asked. “ Did my Bible say it ? Much she doubted it, for she had sometimes, especially since her blindness, clear and beautiful thoughts of heaven that could not be sinful, they rendered her so happy, and took away from her all fear. It was so shocking too,” she thought, “ to think so ill of men—our fellow-creatures, and the creatures of a perfect Father. She loved her brother—he was so simple-minded, and so kind to her, too ; how *could* she call him wicked and depraved ! ”

“ Do you feel no load upon your conscience ? ” I enquired.

“ Bless the good man’s heart ! ” she answered, “ why, what cares have I ? If I can hear his friendly voice, and know he is not heavy-burdened, I am happy. Brother is all to me. Though now and then I’m not well pleased if the young children keep away who play about me sometimes, as if they did not need a playfellow more gay than poor blind Margaret.”

“ Have you no fear of death ? ” said I.

“ Why should I have ? ” she answered quietly ; “ I never injured another in my life.”

“ Can that take off the sting ? ” I asked.

"And I have tried," continued she, "as far as I was able, to please the God who made me."

"Did you never think yourself the vilest of the vile?"

"Bless you! never, sir. How could I? If I had been, you may be sure Mr Clayton and the visiting ladies would never have been so kind to me and Thomas as they have—and how could we expect it? I was only thinking, sir, before you came up, that if I had been wicked when I was young, I would never have been so easy under blindness. Now, it doesn't give me one unquiet hour."

"Margaret, I would you were more anxious."

"It wouldn't do, sir, for the blind to be anxious," she replied. "They must do nothing, sir, but wait with patience. Besides, Thomas and I need no anxiety at all. God gives us more than we require, and it would be very wicked to be restless and unquiet."

"Margaret," I said impressively, "there is a heaven!"

"Yes," she answered quickly, "that I'm sure of. I read of it before I lost my eyes; and since my blindness I have seen it often. God is very good to the afflicted, and none but the afflicted know how He makes up for what he takes away. I have seen heaven, sir, though I have not sight enough to know your face. Do you play dominoes, Mr——what did you say your name was, sir?"

“ You trifle, Margaret.”

“ Oh, no indeed, sir ! But how wonderful and quick my touch has got, and how kind is Heaven there, sir ! I can see the dominoes with my fingers—touch is just as good as sight. Just think how many hours a poor blind creature has, that must be filled up some way or another ! I like to keep to myself, and think, and think ; but not always—and sometimes I want Thomas to read to me ; and when that’s over, I feel a want of something else. I’ll tell you what it is—my eyes they want to open. When that’s the case, I always play at dominoes, and then the feeling goes away. Thomas can tell you that, for he plays with me.”

I continued the conversation for an hour, and with the same result. I grew annoyed and irritated—not with the deluded sinner, as I deemed her, but with myself, the feeble and unequal instrument. For a second time I had attempted to comply with the instructions of my master, and for a second time had I been foiled, and driven back in melancholy discomfiture. The imperturbability and easy replies of the woman harassed and tormented me in the extreme. I had been too recent a pupil to be thoroughly versed in all the subtleties and mysteries of my office. Silence was painful to me, and reply only accumulated difficulty and vexation. She seemed so happy, too ; in the midst of all her heresy and error there existed an unaffected tranquillity and repose which I would have purchased at any cost or sacrifice. I blushed and grew

ashamed, and for a moment forgot that the bereaved creature was unable to behold the confusion with which defeat and exposure had covered me. At length I spoke imperfectly, loosely, and at random. The woman detected me in an untenable position—checked me—and in her artless manner laid bare the fallacy of an inconsiderate assertion. In an instant I was aware of my conviction; I retracted my expression, and involved myself immediately in a fresh dilemma. Again, and as gently as before, she made the unsoundness of a principle evident and glaring. How I closed the argument—the conversation and the interview—and escaped from her, I know not. Burning with shame, despising myself, and desirous of burying both my disgrace and self deep in the earth, where both might be forgotten, I was sensible of hurrying homeward. I reached it in despair, satisfied that I had become a coward and a renegade, and that I was lost, hopelessly and utterly here upon earth, and eternally in heaven!

I had resolved, upon the day succeeding this adventure, to restore to my benefactor the credentials with which he had been pleased to entrust me. Satisfied of the truth of my commission, I could only deplore my inability to execute it faithfully. In spite of what had passed at the cottage-door, the doctrines which I had advocated there lost none of their character and influence upon my own mind. Falling from the lips of others, they dropped with conviction into my *own*

soul. Nothing could shake my *own* unbounded reliance on their saving efficacy and heavenly origin. It was only when *I* spoke of them, when *I* attempted to expound and teach them, that clouds came over the celestial truths, and the sun's disk was dimmed and troubled. The moment that *I* ceased to speak, light unimpaired, and bright effulgence, were restored. It was enough that *I* could feel this. Grace and a miracle had made the startling fact palpable and evident. This assurance followed easily. No oral communication could have satisfied me more fully of the importance and necessity of an immediate resignation of my trust. It was a punishment for my presumption. I should have rested grateful for the interposition which had rescued me from the jaws of hell, and left to others, worthy of the transcendent honour, the glorious task of saving souls. What was *I*, steeped in sin, as *I* had been up to the very moment of my conversion—what was *I*, insolent, pretending worm, that *I* should raise my grovelling head, and presume upon the unmerited favour that had been showered so graciously upon me? It remained for those—purest and best of men, whose lives from childhood onward had been a lucid exposition of the word of truth—whose deeds had given to the world an assurance of their solemn embassy; it was for them to feel the strength, the countenance, and support of Heaven, and to behold with gratitude and joy their labours crowned with a triumphant issue and success. This was the

new train of feeling suggested by new circumstances. I resigned myself to its operation as quickly as I had adopted my previous sentiments; and, a few days before, I was not more anxious to commence my sacred course than I was now miserable and uneasy until I turned from it once and for ever. Mr Clayton had placed in my hands a list of individuals whom he transferred to my care. It was oppressive to know that I possessed it, and my first step was to place it again at his disposal. The interview which I obtained for this purpose was an important one—important in itself—marvellous and astounding in its consequences.

Mr Clayton spent many hours daily in a small room, called *a study*. It was a chamber sacred to the occupation followed there. I had not access to it—nor had any stranger, with the exception of two ill-favoured men, whom I had found, for weeks together, constant attendants upon my benefactor. For a month at a time, not a single day elapsed during which they were not closeted for a considerable period with the divine. A three weeks' interval of absence would then take place; Mr Clayton prosecuted his studies alone and undisturbed, and no strange foot would cross the threshold until the ill-looking men returned, and passed some five weeks in the small sanctuary as before. Who could they be? I had never directly asked the question, curious as I had been to know their history and the purpose of their visits. Had I not learned

from Mr Clayton the impropriety and sinfulness of judging humanity by its looks, I should have formed a most uncharitable opinion of their characters. They were hard-featured men, sallow of complexion, rigid in their looks. I knew that, attached to the church of Mr Clayton, were two missionaries—men of rare piety, and of humble origin—small bootmakers, in fact; sometimes I believed that the visitors and they were the same individuals. Circumstances, however, unfavourable to this idea, arose, and I turned from one conjecture to another, until I reposed at length in the belief that they were sinners—sinners of the deepest dye—such as their ill-omened looks betrayed—and that they sought the kind and ever-ready minister to obtain his counsel, and to share his prayers. At all events, this was a subject upon which I received no enlightening from their confidant. Once I took occasion to make mention of it; but, in an instant, I perceived that my enquiry was not deemed proper to be answered. It was to this forbidden closet—the scene of so much mystery—that, to my great surprise, I found myself invited by my benefactor, when I implored him to release me from the obligation in which I had too hastily involved myself.

“Be seated, Caleb,” said Mr Clayton, as we entered the room in company. “Be seated, and be tranquil. You are excited now.”

I was, in truth, and not more so than deeply mortified and humbled.

" You alarm me, dear young friend," continued the good minister. " You alarm and grieve me. I tremble for you when I behold your versatility. Tell me, how is this? Can you not trust yourself? Can I not trust you?"

I did not answer.

" I have been careful in not thwarting your own good purposes. I have been most anxious to give your feelings their full bent. Has your conversion been too sudden to endure? Have you so soon regretted the abandonment of the great world and all its pleasures—such as they were to you? Has a life of usefulness and peace no charms? Alas! I had hoped otherwise."

I assured my friend that he had mistaken the motive which had compelled me to forsake, at least for the present, the intention that I had entertained honestly—though, I felt, erroneously—for the last few days. Nothing was further from my thoughts than a desire to mix again in a world of sinfulness and trouble. His precepts and bright example had won me from it; and I prayed only to be established in the principles, in the true knowledge of which I knew my happiness to consist. I was not equal to the task which I had proposed to myself, and he had kindly permitted me to assume. I wished to be his meanest disciple—to acquire wisdom from his tuition—and, by the labour of years, to prepare myself finally for that reward which he had so often announced to me as the pecu-

liar inheritance of the faithful and the righteous. I ceased. My auditor did not answer me immediately. He sat for some minutes in silence, and closed his eyes as if absorbed in thought. At length he said to me—

“ You do not surprise me, Caleb. I am prepared for this. I perceived your difficulties from afar. It was inevitable. Self-confidence has placed you where you are. Be happy, and rejoice in your weakness—but turn now to the strong for strength. The work that has begun in your heart must be completed. It shall be so—do not doubt it.”

The minister hesitated, looked hard at me, and endeavoured, as I imagined, to find, in the expression of my countenance, an index to my thoughts. I said nothing, and he proceeded.

“ There are the appointed means. His way is in the sanctuary. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. There is but one refuge for the outcast. I have but one alleviation to offer you. It is all and every thing. Are you prepared to accept it?”

“ You are my friend, my guardian, and my father,” I replied.

“ You have wandered long in the wilderness,” continued the minister. “ You have fed with the swine and the goats. You have found no nourishment there. All was bleak, and barren, and desolate there. The living waters were dried up, and the bread of life was denied to the starving wayfarer.”

“ What must be done, sir ? ”

“ YOU MUST ENTER THE FOLD—and have communion with the chosen people of the Lord. Are you content to do it ? ”

“ Oh, am I worthy,” I exclaimed, “ to be reckoned in the number of those holy men ? ”

“ I cannot doubt it; but your own spirit shall bear witness to your state. To-morrow is our next church-meeting. There, if it be your wish, I will propose you; messengers will be appointed to converse with you. They will come to you, and gather, from your experience, the evidences of your renewed, regenerated character.”

“ What shall I say, sir ? ” I asked in all simplicity.

“ What says the drowning man to the hand that brings him to the shore ? Your beating heart will be too ready to acknowledge the mighty work that has been already done on your behalf. Have you forgotten the way you have been led ? Point it out to them. Have you been plucked as a brand from the burning ? Acknowledge it to them in strains of liveliest gratitude. Does not your soul at this moment overflow at the vivid recollection of all the Lord has done for it and you ? Will it not yearn to sing aloud his praise when strangers come to listen to the song ? Then speak aloud to them. Do you not feel, have not a hundred circumstances all concurred to prove, that you exist a vessel chosen to show forth his praise ? ”

Show it to them, and let them carry back the certain proofs of your redemption—let them convey the sweet intelligence of a brother's safety—and let them bid the church prepare to welcome him with hymns of praise into her loving bosom."

Within a week of the above conversation, two respectable individuals called upon me at Mr Clayton's house—the accredited messengers of the church in which my eternal safety was about to be secured. One was a thickset man, with large black whiskers and corresponding eyebrows. His countenance had a stern expression—the eye especially, which lay couched like a tiger beneath its rugged overhanging brow. You did not like to look at it, and you could not meet it without unpleasantness and awe. The gentleman was very tall and sturdy—evidently a hairy person; he was unshaven, and looked muscular. Acting under the feeling which led him to despise all earthly grandeur and distinction, and which, no doubt, influenced his conduct throughout life, he was remarkable for a carelessness and uncleanness of attire, as powerful and striking as the odour which exhaled from his broad person, and which explained the profession of the gentleman to be—a working blacksmith. His companion was thin, and neat, and dapper. There was an air about *him* that could not have been acquired except by frequent intercourse with the polished and the rich. He was delicacy itself, incapable of a strong expression, and happier

far when he could hint, and not express his sentiments. Had I been subject only to his examination, my ordeal would not have been severe. It was the blacksmith whom I found hard and unimpressible as his own anvil, dark as his forge, and as unpitying as its flames. The thin examiner held the high office of deacon of the church. Whether it was the particularly dirty face of his friend that set him off to such advantage, or whether he had inherent claims to my respect, I cannot tell; well I know, throughout the scrutiny that soon took place, many times I should have fallen beneath the blacksmith's hammer, but for the support and mild encouragement that I found in him. He was most becomingly dressed. He wore a white cravat and no collar. He had light hair closely cut, and his face was as smooth as a woman's. His shirt was whiter than any shirt I have ever seen before or since, and it was made of very fine material. He carried an agreeable smirk upon his countenance, and he disinterred, now and then, some very long and extraordinary word from the dictionary, when he was particularly desirous either to make himself understood or conceal his meaning. He was a ladies' haberdasher.

I received the deputation with a trembling and apprehensive heart. I knew my faith to be sincere, and I believed it to be correct, according to the views of the church of which my revered friend was the minister and organ. Still, I could not be insensible to the importance of the step which I was about to

take, and to the high tone of piety which the true believers demanded from all who joined their ranks, and partook of their exclusive privileges.

It will not be necessary to repeat in detail the course of my examination. At the close of two hours it was concluded, and I am at this moment willing to confess that it was, upon the whole, satisfactory. I mean to myself—for by my questioners, and by the little haberdasher more particularly, the conference was pronounced most gratifying and comforting in every way. I say *upon the whole*; for I could not, even at that early period of my initiation, and with all my excitement and enthusiasm, prevent the intrusion of some disturbing thoughts—some painful impressions, that were not in harmony with the general tenor of my feelings. I had prepared myself to meet and deal with the appointed delegates of Heaven, and I had encountered *men*; yes, and men not entitled to my reverence and regard, except as the chosen ambassadors of the church. One was low, ignorant, and vulgar. He took no pains to conceal the fact; he rather gloried in his native and offensive coarseness. The other was a smoother man, scarcely less destitute of knowledge, or worthier of respect. Looking back, at this distance of time, upon this strange interview, I am indeed shocked and grieved at the part which I then and there permitted myself to undertake. The scene has lost the colours which gave it a false and superficial lustre, and I gaze on the melancholy reality chidden,

and, let me say, instructed by the sight. I can now better appreciate and understand the self-confident tone which pronounced upon my state in the eye of Heaven—the canting expressions of brotherly love—the irreverent familiarity with which Scripture was quoted, garbled, and tortured to justify dissent, and render disobedience holy—the daring assumption of inquisitorial privileges, and the scorn, the illiberality, and self-righteousness, with which my angry, bigoted, and vulgar questioners decided on the merits of every institution that eschewed their fanciful vagaries and most audacious claims. I do not wonder that, overtaken in a career of misery, the consequence of my own imprudence, I should have been arrested by the voice, and smitten by the eloquence, of Mr Clayton. I do not wonder that I listened to his arguments, and observed his conduct, until I was reduced to passiveness, and my mind was willing to be moulded to his purposes. But I do wonder and lament that any obscuration of my judgment, any luxuriance of feeling, should have permitted my youthful understanding for an instant to believe that to such men as my examiners the keys of heaven were entrusted, and that on them, and on their voice, depended the reception of a broken-hearted penitent at the mercy-seat of God.

A few words from the haberdasher-deacon at the breaking up of the convocation, or whatever else it might be termed, were satisfactory, in so far as they showed that my temporal prospects were not entirely

neglected by those who had become so deeply interested in my spiritual welfare. The blacksmith had hardly brought to a close a somewhat lengthy and very ungrammatical exhortation, that wound up the day's proceedings, when the dapper Jehu Tomkins, jumping at once from the confessional to the revel, shook me cordially by the hand, and most kindly suggested to me that, under the patronage of so important and religious a connexion as that into which I was about to enter, I could not fail to succeed, whatever might be the plan which I had laid down for my future support.

"I have heard all about you," added Jehu, "from our respected minister, and you'll soon get into something now. It's a good congregation, sir—wealthy and influential. I should say we have richer people in our connexion than in any about London. Mr Clayton is a very popular man, sir—very good, and speaks the truth."

"He is good, indeed!" I answered.

"Sir, grace is sure to follow you now. It is fifteen years since I first sat under Mr Clayton. Ah! I remember the night I was converted, as if it were yesterday. I always felt up to that very time, the need of something better than I had got. Business had gone wrong ever since I opened shop, and my mind was quite unsettled. Satan tried very hard at me, but it wouldn't do. Sometimes, when my boy had gone home, and shop was shut up, the Tempter

would whisper in my ears words like these—‘Jehu you’re insured, over and over again, for your stock; let a spark fall on the shavings and your fortune’s made.’ Well, sir, once or twice—will you believe it? the Devil had nearly got it all his own way; but grace prevented, and I was saved. I owe it all to Mr Clayton. I was told by one or two of my customers to go and hear him, but somehow or other I never did. Satan kept me back. At last the gentleman as was the deacon—him as built the chapel—Mrs Jehu Tomkins’s father—comes to my shop with his daughter, Mrs Jehu as is now, and spoke to me about the minister. Well, I heard the old gentleman was very rich and pious, and I went the next Sabbath-day as was, with his family, into his pew. I never went anywhere else after that. He seemed to hit the nail just on the head, and I was convinced—oh, quite wonderful! —all on a sudden. I was married to Mrs Jehu before that day twelvemonth. So you see grace followed me throughout, as it will you, my dear brother, if you only mind what you are about, and don’t be a backslider.”

“Mr Clayton,” said I, “has kindly promised to procure employment for me.”

“Ah! and he’ll do it, if he says so,” rejoined Mr Tomkins. “That’s your man. You stick to him, and you won’t hurt. He’s a chosen vessel, if ever there was one. What do you say, brother Buster?”

Brother Buster simply groaned his assent, and

scowled. He had been for some time anxious to depart, and he now took his leave without further ceremony.

“ You wouldn’t think that man was a saint to look at him, would you ? ” asked the deacon, as soon as his friend was gone. “ He is, though. He is riper in spiritual matters than any man I know. Ah ! the Establishment would give something for a few like him. He’ll be taken from us, I fear. We make a idol of him, and that’s sure to be punished. It’s wonderful what he knows ; and how it has come to him we can’t tell.”

I received a pressing invitation from Mr Tomkins to visit his “ small and ’appy family,” as he was pleased to call it, on any evening after eight o’clock, which was his latest business hour. Mrs Jehu,” I was assured, “ was just like her father, and his four small Jehus as exactly like their grandfather, and he wished to say no more for them. After business his family enjoyed invariably a little spiritual refreshment, and that and a hymn made the time pass very agreeably till supper-time, at nine, when he had a ’ot collation, at which he should be most proud to see me.”

To all the charges that have been at various times, with more or less virulence and disinterestedness, brought against the Church of England, that of assuming to itself the divine attribute of searching the secret heart of man has, I believe, never been super-added. It has remained for men very far advanced

indeed in spiritual knowledge and perfection, to assert the bold prerogative, and to venture, unappalled, beneath the frown of Heaven. The close scrutiny on the part of Mr Buster, proper as it was as a step preliminary, was by no means sufficient to procure for me an easy and unquestioned admission into the church which the blacksmith had so ably represented. There was yet another trial to ensue, and another jury to pronounce upon the merits of the anxious candidate. He had yet to prove, to the perfect satisfaction of the self-constituted junto that styled itself *a church*, how God had mercifully dealt with him—to detail, with historic accuracy, the method and procedure of his regeneration, and to find evidence of a spiritual change, that carried on its front the proof of his conversion and his accepted state. All this was to be done before I could be *entitled* to the privileges which Messrs Buster, Tomkins, and the rest, had it in their power to bestow. The manner in which this delicate investigation was carried on, its indecorum and profaneness, I never can forget; nor can I, in truth, remember it without humiliation and deep sorrow. Against the indiscreet, illegal exhibition, I set off my ignorance, simplicity, and desire of serving Heaven; and in these I place my hope of pardon for the share I had in such proceedings.

I received, in due form, a requisition to appear before the body of the *church*, at its general meeting. I appeared. The chapel was thronged, the majority of

members being women. In the hands of nearly every third person was a paper. I was not then aware of its contents; if I had been, the ceremony would, in all probability, have concluded with my entrance. Will it be believed, that this paper contained a formula of the questions which were to test the quality of my faith, and to pronounce upon the vitality and worth of my spiritual pretensions! Any person present was at liberty to address me, and to form his own opinion of my case from the manner and the matter which their ingenuity elicited. At the suggestion of Mr Tomkins, who, in his capacity of deacon, was remarkably active on this occasion, it was deemed proper that I should enter upon my "experience" at once. My heart fluttered as I rose to comply with the demand, and the chapel was hushed. It will be sufficient to say, that I repeated my entire history, and secured the attention of my auditory until I had spoken my last word. There were parts of the narrative which I could, with a glance, perceive to be peculiarly *piquant* and acceptable. As these occurred, a rustling and a murmur expressed the subdued applause. When, for instance, I mentioned the disgust which I had conceived for the University *upon losing the scholarship*, and the uneasiness which I afterwards felt as long as I continued a member of that community, a few of the most acute looked at one another, and shrugged mysteriously, as who should say, "How wondrous are the ways of Provi-

dence!" and when I arrived at the point of my deliverance by the hand of their own minister, there would have been, I thought, no end to the gesticulations, expressions of gratitude and joy, that burst from the "church," in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the minister to control and keep them down. When I had concluded, and whilst the half-suppressed rejoicing still buzzed in the chapel, the stern Buster rose, and presented to me the unmitigated force of his unpleasant eye. Silence prevailed immediately.

"Now, sir," said my old friend, "what makes you think yourself a child of grace? Speak out, if you please; some of us is rather deaf."

"The loathing that I feel of what I was."

"Good!" said Jehu Tomkins, with strong emphasis, and loud enough to be heard by every one.

"When did you feel the fetters fust busting from your spirit?"

"Not till I heard the minister's kind voice," was the reply.

"Do you always feel as strong upon the subject? Do you feel your spirit always willing?"

"Oh, no!" I answered, "there are dreadful fluctuations, and there is nothing so uncertain as self-dependence. I have dark and bitter moments, when I feel, in all its power, the melancholy truth—'When I would do good, evil is present with me.'"

"Capital sign!—capital sign!" exclaimed Jehu Tomkins again; "quite sufficient! quite sufficient!"

Yes, it was so. A few questions were put to me by individuals, rather for the sake of gratifying an impertinent curiosity, than that of elucidating further proof of my proficiency, and the ceremony was finished by my formal reception into the body of the church. A prayer was offered, an address delivered, a hymn sung—the eyes of many ladies were turned with smiling interest upon me—and the meeting separated. Jehu Tomkins was the first to congratulate me upon the happy issue of my trial.

"You are a made man, sir, depend upon it," said he, with his first salutation. "You can't fail. There—do you see that fat man that's just going out—him as has got on the Indy'ankycher?—I sold him that—he came on purpose to hear you, and, if he found you up to the mark, he's going to provide for you. He belongs to all our societies, and just does what he pleases. His word's a law. We've a boiled leg of mutton at nine to-night. Suppose you come to us, and finish the day there? Bless me, what a full meeting we've had! Here's a squeezing!" There was certainly some difficulty in our egression. The people had gathered into a crowd at the small doorway, and men jostled and made their way without regard to others in their vicinity. Lost as I was in the indiscriminate host, a few observations fell upon

my ear that were not, I presume, especially intended for it.

" Well," said a greasy youth, not many yards distant from me, " I doubt his having had a call. There wasn't life enough in it for me. I shouldn't be surprised if he's a black sheep, after all. I wish I had put a question or two to him. I think I could have shown Satan in his heart pretty quick."

" Now you say it," replied the person addressed, " I did think him very backward and lukewarm. I didn't like his tone altogether. Ah! what a thing experimental religion is! You know what it is, and so do I; but I werry much fear that delooded young man is as carnal-minded as my mother was, that went to hell, though I say it, as contented and unconcerned as if she was going to the saints in glory."

The information conveyed to me by Mr Tomkins, as we issued from the chapel, was not unfounded. The very day subsequent to my admittance into the bosom of the church, I was requested to attend the minister in the *sanctum* already referred to. Upon reaching it, I discovered the fat gentleman of the preceding evening, dressed as he was on the previous occasion, and still adorned with Jehu's India handkerchief. Both he and Mr Clayton were seated at table, and writing materials were before them. The moment I entered the apartment, the fat gentleman held out his hand, and shook mine with much stateliness. My friend, however, addressed me.

"Caleb," said he, "we are at length able to fulfill our promise. It is my pleasure to announce to you that a situation is procured for you, suitable to your talents, and agreeable to your feelings. We are both of us indebted to this good gentleman. In your name I have already thanked him, and in your name I have accepted the office which he has been at some pains to obtain for you."

I looked towards the stout gentleman, and bowed in grateful acknowledgment.

"Tell him the duties, Clayton," requested my new-found influential friend.

"Mr Bombasty," proceeded the minister, "feels a warm interest in your welfare. The happy result of yesterday's trial has secured for you a friendship which it will be your duty and study to deserve. There is established, in connexion with our church, a Christian instruction society, of which Mr Bombasty is the esteemed and worthy president. The appointment of a travelling secretary rests with him, and he has this very day nominated you to that distinguished office. I have tendered your thanks. You can now repeat them."

"Tell him the salary," interrupted the president.

"You will receive one hundred and fifty pounds per annum," continued Mr Clayton, "in addition to your travelling charges; apartments likewise, I believe"— He hesitated as if uncertain, and looked towards the president.

“ Yes,” replied that gentleman; “ go on—coals and candles. You answer for him, Clayton—eh?”

“ As I told you, sir,” said my friend, “ I will pledge myself for his trustiness and probity.”

The remembrance of Mr Chaser’s cold-hearted cruelty occurred to my mind as my benefactor spoke, and tears of gratitude trembled in my eyes. The fat gentleman remarked the expression of feeling, and brought the interview to a close.

“ Well, Clayton,” said he, “ you can talk to him. I’ve twenty places to go to yet. Get the paper signed, and he may begin at once. Let a lawyer draw it up. Just make yourself security for a thousand pounds—I don’t suppose he’ll ever have more than half that at a time in his possession—and that’ll be all the society will require. He can come to me to-morrow. Now I’m off. Good-by, my friend—’morning, young man.” The last adieu was accompanied with a patronizing nod of the head, which, with the greeting on my first appearance, constituted the whole of the intercourse that passed between me and my future principal. The moment that he departed, I turned to Mr Clayton, and thanked him warmly and sincerely for all that he had accomplished for me.

“ I shall leave you, sir,” I added, “ with mingled feelings of regret and satisfaction—regret in separating from the purest and the best of men, my friend, my counsellor, and father—but joy, because I cease

to be a burden upon your charity and good-nature. I carry into the world with me the example of your daily life, and my own sense of your dignified and exalted character. Both will afford me encouragement and support in the vicissitudes which yet await me. Tell me how I may better evince my gratitude, and let me gratify the one longing desire of my overflowing heart."

"Caleb," replied the minister with solemnity, "it is true that I have been permitted to protect and serve you. It is true that, but for me, at this moment you would be beyond the reach of help and man's regard. I have brought you from the grave to life. I have led you to the waters of life, of which you may drink freely, and through which you will be made partaker, with the saints, of glory everlasting. This I have done for you. Do I speak in pride? Would I rob Heaven and give the praise and honour to the creature? God forbid! *I* have accomplished little. *I* have done nothing good and praiseworthy but as the instrument of Him whose servant and whose minister I am. Not for myself, but for my Master's sake, I demand your friendship and fidelity. If I have been accounted worthy to save your soul, I am not unworthy of your loyalty and love."

"They are yours, sir. It is my happiness to offer them."

"Caleb," continued my friend in the same tone, "you have lived with me many months. Mine is a

life of privacy and retirement compared with that of other men. I strive to be useful to my fellow-creatures, and am happy if I succeed. If any one may claim immunity from slander and reproach, it is I, who have avoided diligently all appearance of offence. Yet I have not succeeded. You are about to mix again with men. You have joined the church, and you will not fail to hear me spoken of harshly and injuriously."

" Impossible !" I exclaimed.

" Yes, it would seem so, and it would *be*, if justice in this world accompanied men's acts. I tell you," continued Mr Clayton, flushing as he raised his voice, " there are men living now whom I have raised from beggary and want—men indebted to me for the air they breathe—who calumniate and defame me through the world, and who will not cease to do so till I or they are sleeping in the dust. They owed me every thing, like you—their gratitude was unbounded, even as yours. What assurance have I that you will not deal as hardly by your friend as they have done, and still do ?"

" Mr Clayton," I answered eagerly, " I would lay down my life to serve you."

" I believe you to be frank and honest, Caleb. I should believe it; for I am about to pledge a heavy sum upon your integrity—and, indeed, I can but ill spare it. You ask me how I would have you show your thankfulness for what I have accomplished for you. I answer, by giving me your *friendship*. It is

a holy word, and comprehends more than is supposed. A friend believes not ill that is spoken of him to whom he is united by mutual communion and interest; he is faithful to the end, through good report and evil, and falls, if need be, with the man to whom he has engaged his troth and given his heart."

"I am unworthy, sir," I said, "to stand in this relation with one so good, so holy as yourself. I have but a word to say—trust and confide in me. I will never deceive you."

"Let us pray," said Mr Clayton, after a long pause, sighing as he spoke, and speaking very softly—and immediately he fell upon his knees, and I, according to a practice which I had acquired at the chapel, leaned upon a chair, and turned my face to the window.

It was about a month after my installation into my new office, that business connected with the society carried me to the village of Highgate. It was late in the evening when my commission was completed, and I was enabled, after a day of excessive fatigue, to direct my steps once more homeward. The stage-coach, which set out from the village for London twice during the day, luckily for me, was appointed to make its last journey about half an hour after my engagements had set me at liberty. A mile, across fields, intervened between me and the coach-office. Short as the distance was, it was any thing but an agreeable task to get over it, with the rain spitting into my face, the

boisterous wind beating me back, and the darkness of night confounding me at every turn. In good time, however, I reached the inn. Providence favoured me. There were but two seats unoccupied in the coach; one was already engaged by a gentleman who had requested to be taken up a mile forward; the other had just been given up by a lady who had been frightened by the storm, and had postponed her return to London to the following day. This seat I immediately secured, and in a few minutes afterwards we were on our way towards Babylon. We made but little progress. The breed of coach horses has been much improved since the period of which I write; and a journey from Highgate to London was a much more important event than a railway conductor of the present day would suppose. My companions were all men. Their conversation turned upon the topics of the day. A monetary crisis had taken place in the mercantile world; and for many days I had heard nothing spoken of but the vast losses which houses and individuals of high character and standing had incurred, and the bankruptey with which the community had become suddenly threatened. The subject had grown stale and wearisome to me. It had little interest, in fact, for one whose humble salary of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum depended so little upon the great fluctuations of commerce; and I accordingly disposed myself for sleep as soon as the words *bills*, *money*, and *bankruptey*, became the staple

matter of discourse. I had scarcely established a comfortable doze before the coach stopped suddenly, and awoke me. It had halted for the last inside. A gentleman, apparently stout and well wrapped up—it was impossible to speak positively on the subject, the night was so very dark—trod his way into the vehicle over the toes of his fellow-passengers, and took his seat. The coach was once more moving towards the metropolis, and again I endeavoured to lull myself to sleep. The same expressions proceeded from the lips of the travellers, and they were growing more and more indistinct and shadowy, when I was startled all on a sudden by one of the most palpable sounds that had ever disturbed and confounded a dreamer. I sat up and listened, coughed to convince myself that I was certainly awake, and the sounds were repeated as clear and as audible as before. I would have sworn that Mr Clayton was the gentleman whom we had last picked up—that he was now in the coach with me—and was now talking, if the words which fell from the traveller had not been such as he would never have used, and the subject on which he spoke had not been one upon which Mr Clayton, I believed, was as ignorant as a child. The resemblance between the voices was so great, that I pronounced the phenomenon the most extraordinary that had ever occurred to me; and growing quite wakeful from the incident, I continued to listen to the accents of the speaker, until once or twice I had almost thought it my duty to acquaint

him with the remarkable fact, which he was now living to illustrate. But I held my peace, and the conversation proceeded without interruption.

“ You may depend upon it,” said one gentleman, “ things must get worse before they’ll mend. Half the mischief isn’t done yet. There’s a report to day that ——— cannot hold out much longer. It will be a queer thing if they smash. Many petty tradesmen bank with that house, who will be ruined if they go. Things are certainly in a very sweet state.”

“ You do not mean,” said *the voice*, trembling with emotion or alarm, “ that the house of ——— threatens to give way? I have been in the city to-day, and did not hear a syllable of this. I think you must be mistaken. Good God, how frightful !”

Well, it was really wonderful ! I could have sworn that Mr Clayton was the speaker. Had he not concluded with the ejaculation, my doubt would certainly have ceased. That exclamation, of course, removed the supposition entirely.

“ You’ll find I’m right, sir,” was the reply of the traveller who spoke first. “ At least, I fear you will. I hope I may be wrong. If you have any thing in their hands, you would find it worth your while, I think, to pay them an early visit to-morrow morning. If there’s a run upon them, nothing in the world can save them.”

“ And is it true,” asked *the voice*, “ that ——— stopped payment on Tuesday ? I came to town from

Warwickshire only yesterday, and this is the first news that I heard."

"Oh, there's no doubt about that!" answered a third person; "but that surprised nobody. The only wonder is, how he managed to keep afloat so long. He has been up to the chin for the last twelvemonth and more. I hope you don't lose there, sir?"

"Mine has been the devil's luck this year," continued *the voice* in a bitter savage tone, that never belonged to Mr Clayton. "Yes, gentlemen, I lose heavily by them both. But never mind, never mind, *one* shall wince for it, if he has been playing ducks and drakes with my good money. He shall feel the scourge, depend upon it. I'll never leave him till he has paid me back in groans. Heaven, what a sum!"

*The voice* said no more during the journey. The other gentlemen having lost nothing by the various failures, discussed matters with philosophy and praiseworthy decorum. Sometimes, indeed, "the third person" grew slightly facetious and jocose when he represented to himself what he termed "the queer cut" that some old friend would display on presenting his cheque for payment at the rickety counter of Messrs — & Co.; but no deeper expression of feeling escaped one of those who spoke so long and volubly on what concerned themselves so very little. I was puzzled and disturbed. The stranger had returned

from Warwickshire the day before. Twice during my residence with the minister, business of importance had carried him to that county. It was certainly a curious coincidence; but coincidences more curious pass by us every day unheeded. It would have been absurd to conclude from that the identity of the stranger; yet the fact, coupled with *the voice*, staggered and confounded me. I said nothing, but determined, as soon as we reached the public streets, to call to my aid the light—feeble as it was—of the dimly-burning lamps, which, at the time I speak of, were placed at a considerable distance from one another along the principal streets of London, scattering no light, and looking like oil lamps in the last stage of a lingering consumption. These afforded me little help. The weakest effort of illumination imaginable strayed across the coach window as we passed a burner, about as serviceable as the long interval of darkness that ensued, and far more tantalizing. We were driving through the city. I was still brooding over the singular occurrence when the coach stopped. The stranger alighted. I endeavoured to obtain sight of him; but he was so wrapped and clothed that I did not succeed. The coach was on its way again, and I had just opportunity enough to discover that we had halted at the corner of the street in which Mr Clayton resided. I had been so intent upon scanning the figure of the traveller, that the fact had escaped me. Had I been aware of it, I would certainly have fol-

lowed the man, and seen him at all events safely beyond the door of the minister. Now it was too late.

I could not repress the desire which I felt to visit Mr Clayton on the following morning. I went to him at an early hour. If he and the stranger were one and the same person, I should be made aware of it at a glance. The cause that had affected him so deeply in the stage-coach existed still, and his manner must betray him. My suspicions were, thank Heaven ! instantly removed. I found my friend tranquil as ever, busy at his old occupation, and welcoming me with his usual smile of benevolence. He was paler than usual, I thought ; but this impression only convinced me how difficult it is to be charitable and just, when bias and prejudice once take possession of us. My friend was, if any thing, kinder and more affectionate than ever. He spoke to me about my new employment, gave me his advice on points of difficulty, and bade me consult him always, and without hesitation, when doubt might lead me into danger. He could not tell me how happy he had been made by having secured a competency for me ; and he hoped sincerely that no act of mine would ever cause him to regret the step that he had taken.

“Indeed,” said he, “I have great confidence in you, Caleb. I do not know another person in the world upon whose character I would have staked so large a sum. In truth, I should not have been justified. A

thousand pounds is a heavy venture for one so straitened as I am. But you are worthy of it all. You are a faithful and good boy, and will never give me reason to repent my generosity. Will you, child?"

"No, sir," I replied; "not if I am master of myself."

"It is strange," continued the good man, "how we attach ourselves to individuals! There are some men who repel you at first sight—with whom your feelings are at variance as oil with water. Others, again, who win us with a look—to whom we could confide the secrets of our inmost heart, and feel satisfied of their losing nothing of their sacredness. Have you never experienced this, Caleb?"

"I could speak to you, sir," said I, in return, "as unreservedly as to myself."

"Yes, and I to you. It is a strange and beautiful arrangement. Providence has a hand in this, as in all other sublunary dispensations. We were created to be a comfort and a joy to one another, and to reciprocate confidence and love. Such instances are not confined to modern times. History tells us of glorious friendships in the ancient world. The great of old—of Greece and Rome—they who advanced to the very gate and threshold of TRUTH, and then despairingly turned back—they have honoured human nature by the intensity and permanency of their attachments. But what is a Pagan attachment in comparison with

that which exists amongst believers, and unites in bonds that are indissoluble the faithful hearts of pious Christians?"

" Ah, what indeed, sir ! "

" Come to me to-morrow, Caleb," continued my friend, changing the subject. " Let me see you as often as your duties will permit you. We must not be strangers. I did not intend to give you up so easily. It is sweet and refreshing to pursue our old subjects of discourse. You are not tired of them ? "

" Oh no, sir ! "

" Come, then, to-morrow."

It was truly delightful to listen to the minister. I had never known him more sweetly disposed and more calm than on this occasion. He was unruffled by the presence of one anxious thought. Ah, how different would he have been if he had really proved to be my coach acquaintance ! How I despised myself for the one unkind half suspicion which I had entertained so derogatory to the high character of the saint. But it was a great comfort to me, nevertheless, to be so satisfied of my delusion, and to feel so easy and so happy in my mind at the close of our long interview. According to my promise, I saw the minister on the following day. He was as peaceful and heavenly-minded as before. Another appointment was made and kept—another succeeded to that; and for one fortnight together, I spent many hours daily in the society of my respected friend.

In pursuance of an arrangement which we had made, I called one afternoon at Mr Clayton's house, and was distressed to hear that he was confined to his bed by a sudden attack of illness. He had directed his servant to acquaint all visitors with his condition, and to admit no one to him with the exception of the medical attendant and myself. I was eager to profit by my privilege, and was in a few seconds at the bedside of my benefactor. He was reading when I approached him, and he looked flushed and agitated. He put his book away from him, and held out his hand to me. I pressed it most affectionately.

"I have been ill, Caleb," he began, "but I am better now, and I shall be quite well soon. Do not be alarmed."

"How did it happen, sir?" I asked.

"We are in the flesh now, dear boy, and are subject to the evils of the flesh. Hereafter it will be otherwise. Sorrow and distress, we are told, shall be no more. Oh, happy time for sinners! I have grievously offended. This very day I have permitted worldly thoughts to disturb and harass me, and to shake the fleshly tabernacle. It was wrong, very wrong."

"What has happened, sir?" I enquired.

The minister looked hard and tenderly upon me, pressed my hand again, and bade me take a chair.

"Bring it near to the bed, Caleb," said Mr Clayton; "I like to have you near me. I am better since

you came. To see you is always soothing to my mind. I am reminded, then, that I am not altogether so worthless and insignificant a worm as I believe myself, since I have been able to do so much for you. Tell me, do you still like the employment that I procured for you?"

"I would not resign it for any other that I know of. It is every thing to me. I feel my independence, and I have been told that I am useful to my fellow-creatures. It would be a bitter hour to me, sir, that should find me deprived of my appointment."

"And that hour is very distant, Caleb, if you are sensible of your duty, and grateful to the instruments which Heaven has raised for you. You shall always feel your independence, and always hear that you are useful and respected. Be but faithful. It is a lesson that I have repeated to you many times—it cannot be told too often."

"You are a patient and a kind instructor, sir."

"Come closer to me, Caleb, and now listen. But first—look well at me, and tell me what you see."

I looked as he required, but gave no answer.

"Tell me, do you see the lines and marks that beggary and ruin bring upon the countenance of men? Does poverty glare from any one expression? *I am a lost and ruined man.*"

"You, sir?"

"Yes. The trifling pittance upon which I lived, and barely lived, and yet from which I could still

extract enough to do a little good—to feed, perhaps, one starving throat—is wrested, torn from me, and from those who shared in what it might obtain. I am myself a beggar."

Mr Clayton became agitated as he spoke, and I implored him to compose himself.

"Yes—it is that I wish to do. I should be above the influence of dross. And for myself I am. Would that I might suffer alone! And this is not all. The man who has effected my ruin owes every thing to me. I found him penniless, and raised him to a condition that should have inspired him with regard and gratitude. I would have trusted that man with confidence unbounded. I did entrust him with my all, and he has beggared and undone me."

"Take it not to heart, sir," I said, soothing the afflicted man; "things may not be so bad as you suppose."

"They cannot be worse," was the reply; "but I will *not* take it to heart. The blow is hard to bear—the carnal man must feel it—yet I am not without my solace. Read to me, Caleb."

I read a chapter from the work that was lying on the bed. It was called "*The Good Man's Comfort in Affliction*." It was effectual in restoring my friend to composure. He spoke afterwards with his usual softness of manner.

"This bad man, Caleb," he resumed, "is a member of our church. I am sorry for it—grievously, bitterly

sorry for it. The scandal must be removed. Personally, I would be as passive and forbearing as a child; but the church suffers whilst one such member is permitted to profane her ordinances. He must be cut off from her. It must be done. The church must disavow the man who has betrayed her minister, and disgraced himself. I have been your friend, Caleb—you must now prove mine."

"Most willingly," said I.

"This business must be brought before a general meeting of the church. From me the accusation will come with ill grace, and yet a public charge must be preferred. You must be the champion of my cause. Yours shall be the task of conferring a lasting obligation on your friend—yours shall be the glory of ridding the sanctuary of defilement."

"How am I to act, sir?"

"Your course is very easy, child. A meeting shall be convened without delay. You shall attend it. You shall be made master of the case. You must propose an examination of his affairs on the part of the church. The man has failed—he is a bankrupt—our church is pure, and demands an investigation into the questionable conduct of her children. This you shall do. The church will do the rest."

I know not how it was—I cannot tell what led to it; but a cold shudder crept through my body, and a sudden sickness overcame me. I thought of the coach scene—*the voice* seemed more like than ever—

the tones were the very same. I seemed unexpectedly enclosed and entangled in some dreadful mystery. I could not conceive why I should hesitate to accept the invitation of my friend with alacrity and pleasure. He was my benefactor, preserver, best and only friend. He had been defrauded, and he called upon me now to perform a simple act of justice. A man under much less obligation to the minister would have met his wishes joyfully; but I *did* hesitate and hold back. A natural suggestion, one that I could not control or crush, told me as loudly as a voice could speak, not to commit myself by an immediate and rash consent. It must have been the *coach*—for, previously to that adventure, had the minister commanded me to accuse a hundred men, a hint would have sufficed for my obedience. But that unfortunate occurrence, now revived by the manner of my friend—by the expressions which he employed—by the charge which he adduced against the unhappy member of his church—filled me with doubt, uncertainty, and alarm. Mr Clayton was not slow to remark what was passing in my mind.

“ How is this, Caleb? ” he enquired. “ You pause and hesitate.”

“ What has he done, sir? ” I asked, in my confusion, hardly knowing what I said.

“ Done! ” exclaimed the minister, with an offended air. “ Caleb, he has ruined the man who has made you what you are.”

It was too true. Mr Clayton had indeed made me what I was. It was a just reproof. It was ingratitude of the blackest character, to listen so coldly to his wishes. For months I had received daily and hourly the most signal benefits from his hands. He had never till now called upon me to make the shadow of a return for all his *disinterested* love—*disinterested*, ah, was it so? I hated myself for the momentary doubt—and yet the doubt returned upon me. If I had not heard his voice in the coach, such a suspicion would have been impossible. Now, any thing seemed possible—nothing was too extraordinary to happen. Well, it was little that the minister requested me to do. I had but to demand an investigation into the man's affairs. It was easily done, and without any cost or sacrifice of principle. But why could not the minister demand the same himself? “It would be unseemly,” he asserted. Well, it might be—why had he not selected an elder member of the church? Because, as he had often told me, there was none so dear to him. This was plain and reasonable, and all this passed through my brain with the rapidity of thought in an instant of time.

“ You may command me, sir,” I said at length.

“ No, Caleb, I will not *command* you. To serve your friend would have been, I deemed, a labour of love. I did not *command* you, and I now retract the trifling request which I find I was too bold to make.”

“ Do not talk so to me, Mr Clayton, I entreat you.

I am disturbed and unwell to-day. Your illness has unsettled me. Pray, command me. Speak to me as is your wont—with the same kindness and warmth. You know I am bound to you; let me serve you in any way you please."

"We will speak of it some other time. Let us change the subject now. There are twenty men who will be eager to comply with the wishes of their minister. An intimation will suffice."

"But why, sir," I returned—"why should others be privileged to do your bidding, and I denied? Forgive my apparent coldness, and give me my instructions."

"Not now," said Mr Clayton, softened by my returning warmth. "Let us read again. Some other time."

In a few days the subject was again introduced, and I put in possession of the history of the unfortunate man who was so soon to be brought under the anathema of the church. According to the statement of the minister, the guilty person had received at various times from him as a loan no less a sum than four thousand pounds, the substance of his wealth, besides an equal amount from other sources, for which Mr Clayton had made himself accountable. Mr Clayton had implicated himself so seriously, as he said, for the advantage of the man whom he had known from boyhood, and raised from beggary, simply on account of the love he bore him, and in consideration of his

Christian character. Of every farthing thus advanced the minister had been defrauded, and within a month the trader had declared himself a bankrupt. That the minister should have acted so inconsiderately and prodigally, might seem strange to any one who did not thoroughly understand the extreme unselfishness of his disposition. Towards me he had behaved with an equal liberality; and I, at least, had no right to question the truth of every word he spoke. The conduct of the man appeared odious and unpardonable; and I regretted that I should have doubted, for one moment, the propriety of assisting so manifest an act of justice. Let me acknowledge that there was much need of self-persuasion to arrive at this conclusion. I wished to believe that I felt *urged* to my determination; but the necessity that I experienced of working myself up to a conviction of the justice of the case, militated sadly against so pleasing a delusion.

The second church meeting in which it fell to my lot to perform a distinguished character, took place soon after the communication which I received from my respected friend. It was convened with the especial object of enquiring into the circumstances connected with the failure of Mr George Whitefield Bunyan Smith. The chapel was, if possible, fuller than on the former evening, and the majority of members was, as before, women. A movement throughout the assembly—a whispering, and a ceaseless expectation, indicated the raciness and interest which

attached to the matter in hand, and every eye and mouth seemed opened in the fulness of an anxious expectation. I sat quietly and uncomfortably, and my heart beat palpably against my clothes. I endeavoured to paint the villany of Mr Smith in the darkest colours, and, by the contemplation of it, to rouse myself to self-esteem—but the effort was a failure. I could see nothing but the man in the coach, and hear nothing but *the voice*, which sounded in my ears louder than ever, *and far more like*; and I became at length perfectly satisfied that I had no business to stand in the capacity of Mr Smith's accuser. It was too late to recant. The bell had rung—the curtain was up—and the performances were about to begin.

A hymn, as usual, ushered in the proceedings of the day. The fifty-second psalm was then read by the minister, in the beautiful tone which he knew so well how to assume, and reverence and awe accompanied his emphatic delivery. Ah! could I ever forget the hour when those accents first dropped with medicinal virtue on my soul—when every syllable from his lips brought unction to my bruised nature—and the dark shadows of earth were dissipated and destroyed, beneath the clear, pure light of heaven that he invoked and made apparent! Why passed the syllables now coldly and ineffectually across the heart they could not penetrate? Why glittered they before the eye with phosphorescent lustre, void of all heat and might? I could not tell. The charm was gone. It

was misery to know it. The minister having concluded, “ Brother Buster was requested to engage in prayer.” That worthy rose *instanter*. First, he coughed, then he made a face—an awful face—then closed his eyes—then opened them again, looked up, and stretched forth his arms. At last he spoke. He prayed for the whole world, including the islands recently discovered, “even from the river to the oceans of ages”—then for Europe, and “more especially” for England, and London “in particular,” but “chiefly” for the parish in which the chapel stood, and “principally” for the Chosen People then and there assembled; and, “above all,” for the infatuated man upon whose account they had been brought together. “Oh! might the delooded sinner repent *off* his sin, and having felt the rod, turn from the error *off* his ways. Oh! might the church have grace to purify itself; and oh! might the vessel wot was chosen this night to bring the criminal to justice, be hindood with strength for the work; and oh! might the criminal be enabled to come out of it with clean hands, (which he very much doubted;) and oh! might the minister be preserved to his church for many years to come; and oh! might he himself be a doorkeeper in heaven, rather than dwell in the midst of wickedness and sinners!” This was the substance of the divine supplication, offered up by Jabez Buster in the presence of the congregation, and listened to with devout respect and seriousness by the refined and intellectual

Mr Clayton. Another hymn succeeded immediately It must have been written for the occasion ; for the sentiment of it was in accordance with the prayer. It was a wail over the backsliding of a fallen saint. To the assembly thus prejudiced—an assembly made up of men of business and their wives, mechanics, dress makers, servant-maids, and the like, an address suitable to their capacities was spoken. Mr Clayton himself delivered it.—He trembled with emotion when he referred to the painful duty which he was now called upon to perform. “ Dear brethren,” said he, “ you are all aware of the unhappy condition of that brother who has long been bound to us by every tie that may unite the brethren in cordial and in Christian love. Truly he has been dear to all of us; and for myself, I can with sincerity aver, that no creature living was dearer to me in the flesh than him upon whose conduct we are met this night in Christian charity to adjudicate. Yes, he was my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance. We took sweet counse l together, and we walked to the house of prayer in company. I hope, I pray—would that I might add that I believe !—the sin that has been committed in the face of the church, and before the world, may be found not to lie at the door of him we loved and cherished. We are not here to take cognizance o the temporal concerns of every member of our con-gregation. We have no right to do this so long as

the church is kept pure, and suffers not by the delinquencies of her children. If the limb be unworthy and unsound, let it be lopped off. You have heard that the worldly affairs of our brother are crushed; it is whispered abroad that there is reason to fear the commission of discreditable acts. Is this so? If it be true, let the whisper assume a bolder form, and pronounce our brother unworthy of a place with the elect. If it be false, let every evil tongue be silenced, and let us rejoice exceedingly, yea, with the timbrel and dance, with stringed instruments and loud-sounding cymbals. For my own part, I will not believe him guilty until proof positive has made him so. His accuser is here this night. From what I know of our young brother, I am satisfied he will proceed most cautiously. Should he suggest simply an investigation into the recent transactions of the unfortunate man, it will be our duty to act upon that suggestion. If he comes armed with evidences of guilt, they must be examined with a kind but still impartial spirit. I know not to what extent it is proposed to proceed. It is not for me to know it. I am not his prosecutor. I shall not pronounce upon him. It is for you to judge. If he be proved culpable in this most melancholy business, and, alas! I fear he must be if reports are true—though you must be careful to discard reports and look to testimony only—our course is plain and easy. Pardon is not with us; it must be

sought elsewhere. I will not detain you longer. Brother Stukely, the church will listen to your charge."

But Brother Stukely had been for some time rendered incapable of speech. He was staggered and overwhelmed. He distrusted his eyes, his ears, and every sense that he possessed. What?—was *this* Mr Clayton, the meek, the pious, the good, the benevolent, the just, the truth-telling, the Christian, and the minister? What?—could he assert that he was satisfied of his victim's innocence until I should prove him guilty—I, who knew nothing of the man and his affairs but what I gathered from his own false lips? There was some terrible mistake here. I dreamt, or raved. What!—had the history of the last twelve-month been a cheat—a fable? How was it—where was I? What!—could Mr Clayton talk thus—could HE descend to falsehood and deceit—HE, the immaculate and infallible? What a moral earthquake was here! What a re-enacting of the fall of man! But every eye was upon me, and the church was silent as death, waiting for my rising. The chapel commenced swimming round me. I grew sick, and feared that I was becoming blind; for a mist came before my eyes, and confounded all things. At length I was awakened to something like consciousness, by a rapid and universal expectoration. I rose, and became painfully distressed by a conflict of opposing feelings. I remembered, in spite of the present obliquity of the minister,

his great kindness to me—I remembered it with gratitude. This urged me to speak aloud, whilst a sense of justice as strongly demanded silence ; and pity for the man whom I had undertaken to accuse, but who had never offended me, cried shame upon me for the words I was about to utter. For a second I stood irresolute, and a merciful interference was sent to rescue me.

“ Why,” exclaimed a voice that came pleasing to my ears—“ why are you going to accuse this here brother ? Harn’t twenty men failed afore, and you never thought of asking questions ? ”

I looked round, and my friend Thompson of happy memory nodded familiarly, and by no means disconcertedly, to me. I had never seen him in the chapel before. I did not know that he was a member. Here was another mystery ! His words were the signal for loud disapprobation. He had marred the general curiosity at an intensely interesting moment, and the anger that was conceived against him was by no means partial. The minister rose in the midst of it. He looked very pale and much annoyed; but his manner was still mild, and his expressions as full of charity and kind feeling as ever.

“ It was a proper enquiry,” he said; “ one that should immediately be answered.” Heaven forbid that their conduct, in one particular, should savour of injustice ! In due time the explanation would have been offered. Had their brother waited for that time, he

would have found that his harsh observation might have been withheld. The unfortunate man needed not the champion who had stood so irreverently forward. “I can assure our brother, that there is one who will hear of his innocence with greater joy than any other man may feel for him.” But it was his duty to state, and publicly, that there were circumstances connected with this failure, that unfavourably marked it from every other that had taken place amongst them. These must be enquired into. Their brother Stukely had been interrupted in the charge which he was about to make. He repeated that he knew not how far that charge might have been brought home. He would propose now, that two messengers be appointed to wait upon the bankrupt, and to examine thoroughly his affairs, and that, previous to their report, no further proceedings should take place. The purity and disinterestedness of their conduct should be made apparent. Brothers Buster and Tomkins were the gentlemen whom he proposed for the delicate office, with the full assurance that they would execute their commission with Christian charity, tempering justice with heavenly mercy.

The assembly gave a reluctant consent to this arrangement. “Such things,” it was argued, “were better settled at once; and it would have been far more satisfactory if the bankrupt’s matters had been disclosed to the meeting, who had come on purpose to hear them, and had neglected important matters at

home, rather than be disappointed." The meeting, however, dissolved with a hymn, sung without spirit or heart. At the close of it, the minister retired. He passed me on his way; looked at me coldly, and I thought a frown had settled on his brow almost in spite of him. I was scarcely in the open street again, before Thompson was at my side, shaking my hand with the greatest heartiness.

"Well," said he, "I should much sooner have thought of seeing the devil in that chapel than you, any how. Why, what does it all mean? I thought you were in Brummagem."

"Ah! Thompson," I exclaimed sighing, "I wish I were! It is a long history."

"Well, do let's have it, I *am* astonished."

I put him in possession of my doings since we parted at the Bull's Head Inn in Holborn. I had not finished when we arrived at my lodgings. I invited my old friend to supper, and, after that meal, he heard the conclusion of the narrative.

"Well," said he at last, "some people don't believe in sperits. Now I do. I believe that a sperit has brought you and me together again. You've told me a good deal. Now, I'll tell you something. Clayton's an out-and-outer."

"He's a mysterious and unintelligible being!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," answered Thompson, "you were always fond of them fine words. P'r'aps you mean the same as me.

after all. What I mean is, that fellow beats all I ever came near. Talk of the Old Un ! He's a babby to him."

"I can believe any thing now," I answered.

"I don't complain ; because I think it serves me right. I did very well at our parish church, and had no business to leave it; and I shouldn't either, if I hadn't been a easy fool all my life. I went on right well there, and understood the clergyman very well, and I should have done to this day if it hadn't been for my missus. She's always worritting herself about her state; and she happened to hear this Mr Clayton, and nothing would please her but we must join his congregation, the whole biling lot of us, and get elected, as they call it. She said all was cold in the church, and nothing to catch hold on there. I'm blessed if I haven't catched hold of a good deal more than I like in this here chapel. They call one another brothers, —sich brothers, I fancy, as Cain was to Abel. They are the rummest Christians you ever see'd. Just look at the head of them—that Mr Clayton, rolling in riches"—

"In what ?" said I, interrupting him. " You mistake. The little that he had is lost."

"Oh, don't you be gammoned !" was the reply. "What he has lost won't hurt him. He's got enough now to buy this street, out and out. He's the greediest fellow for money this world ever saw."

"I am puzzled, Thompson," said I.

“ Yes, perhaps you are, and you’ll be more puzzled yet when you know all. Why, what is all this about poor Smith ? I knew him before Clayton ever got hold of him, when the chap hadn’t a halfpenny to fly with, but was a most oudacious fellow at spekylating and inventions, and was always up to something new. One day he had a plan for making moist sugar out of bricks—then soap out of nothing—and sweet oil out of stones. At last Clayton hears of him, hooks him up, and gets him to the chapel ; first converts him, and then goes partners with him in the spekylations—let’s him have as much money as he asks for, and because soap doesn’t come from nothing, and sugar from bricks, and sweet oil from stones, he stops short, sews him up, drives him into the Gazette, and now wants to throw him into the world a beggar, without name and character, and with ten young ‘uns hanging about his widowed arm for bread.”

“ Oh, it’s dreadful if it’s true ! ” said I ; “ but if he has robbed the minister, whatever Mr Clayton may be, he ought to be punished.”

“ But it isn’t true, and there’s the villany of it. Smith’s a fool ; you never see’d a bigger in your life ; and though he thinks himself so clever in his inventions and diskiveries, he’s as simple as a child in business. Why, he gave three thousand pounds for the machinery wot was to make soap out of nothing ; and so all the money’s gone. How sich a deep un as Clayton ever trusted him, I can’t tell. He’s waxed

with himself now, and wants to have his spite upon his unfortunate tool."

"I can hardly believe it," said I.

"No; and do you think I would have believed it the first day as missus made me come to listen to that out-and-outer? and, do you think if I had known about it, they would ever have lugged me in to be a brother? You shall take a walk with me to-morrow, if you please; and if you don't believe it then of your own accord, why I sha'n't ask you."

"He has been so kind, so generous to me. He has behaved so unlike a mercenary man."

"Yes; that's just his way. That's what he calls, I suppose, *sharpening his tools*. He's made up his mind long ago to have out of you all he gave you, and a little more besides. Why, what did you get up for in the chapel? Didn't he say it was to bring a charge against Smith? Why, what do you know of Smith? Can't you see, with half an eye, he's been feeding of you to do his dirty work; and, if you had turned out well, wouldn't it have been cheap to him at the price?"

"What is it," said I, "you propose to do-morrow?"

"To take a walk; that's all. Don't ask questions. If you go with me, I'll satisfy your doubts."

"Surely," said I, "his congregation must have known this; and they would not have permitted him"—

"Ah, my dear sir, you don't know human nature! Wait till you have lived as long as I have. Now,

there's my wife ; she knows as much as I do about the man, and yet I'm blowed if she doesn't seem to like him all the better for it ! She calls him a chosen vessel, and only wishes I was half as sure of salvation. As for the congregation, they are a complete set of chosen vessels together, and the more you blow 'em up, the better the vessels like it. If what they call the world didn't speak agin 'em, they'd be afraid they were going wrong. So you never can offend them."

Thompson continued in the same strain for the rest of the evening, bringing charge after charge against the minister, with the view of proving him to be a hypocrite of the deepest dye. As he had fostered and protected me, Thompson explained that he had previously maintained and trained up Smith, whom he never would have deserted had all his speculations issued favourably. The loss of his money had so enraged him, that his feelings had suddenly taken a different direction, and he would now not stop until he had thoroughly effected the poor man's ruin. He (Thompson) knew Smith well ; he had seen his books ; and the man was as innocent of fraud as a child unborn. Clayton knew it very well, and the trick of examining the books was all a fudge. " That precious pair of brothers, Buster and Tomkins, knew very well what they were about, and would make it turn out right for the minister somehow. As for hisself, he stood up for the fellow because he hadn't another friend in the place. He knew he should be kicked

out for his pains; but that would be more agreeable than otherways." From all I gathered from Thompson, it appeared that the pitiable man—the audacious minister of God—was the slave of one of the most corroding passions that ever made shipwreck of the heart of man. *The love of money* absorbed or made subservient every other sentiment. To heap up riches there was no labour too painful, no means too vicious, no conduct too unjustifiable. The graces of earth, the virtues of heaven, were made to minister to the lust, and to conceal the demon behind the brightness and the beauty of their forms. There is no limit to the moral baseness of the man of avarice. There was none with Mr Clayton. He lived to accumulate. Once let the desire fasten, anchor-like, with heavy iron to the heart, and what becomes of the world's opinion, and the tremendous menaces of Heaven? Mr Clayton was a scholar, a man of refinement, eloquent—an angel not more winning: he was self-denying in his appetites, humble, patient—powerful and beautiful in expression, when the vices of men compelled the unwilling invective. Witness the burst of indignation when he spoke of Emma Harrington, and the race to which it was her misery to belong. He was, to the eyes of men, studious and holy as an anchorite. But, better than his own immortal soul, he loved and doated upon *gold!* That love acknowledged, fed, and gratified, when are its demands appeased?—when does conscience raise a barrier

against its further progress? It is a state difficult to believe. Could I have listened with an ear of credulity to the tale of Thompson—could I have borne to listen to it with patience, had I not witnessed an act of turpitude that ocular demonstration could only render credible—had I not been prepared for that act by the tone, the manner, the expressions of the minister, when we passed an hour together, ignorant of each other's presence? It was a dreadful conviction that was forced upon me, and as wonderful as terrible. Self-delusion, for such it was, so perfect and complete, who could conceive—hypocrisy so super-eminent, who could conjecture! There was something, however, to be disclosed on the succeeding day. Thompson was very mysterious about this. He would give no clue to what he designed. I should judge from what I saw of the truth of his communications. Alas! I had seen enough already to mourn over the most melancholy overthrow that had ever crushed the confidence, and bruised the feelings, of ingenuous youth.

I passed a restless and unhappy night. Miserable dreams distressed me. I dreamt that I was sentenced to death for perjury—that the gallows was erected—and that Buster and Tomkins were my executioners. The latter was cruelly polite and attentive in his demeanour. He put the rope round my neck with an air of cutting civility, and apologized for the whole proceeding. I experienced vividly the moment

of being turned off. I suffered the horrors of strangulation. The noose slipped, and I was dangling in the air in excruciating agony, half-dead and half-alive. Buster rushed to the foot of the scaffold, and with Christian charity fastened himself to my legs, and hung there till I had breathed my last. Whilst he was thus suspended, he sang one of his favourite hymns with his own rich and effective nasal vigour. Then I dreamt I was murdering Bunyan Smith in his sleep; Mr Clayton was pushing me forward, and urging a dagger into my hand. Just as I had killed him I was knocked down by Thompson, and Clayton ran off laughing. Then I woke up, thank Heaven! more frightened than hurt, with every limb in my body sore and aching. Then, instead of going to sleep again, which I could not do, I lay awake, and reflected on what had taken place; and I thought all I had heard against Mr Clayton, and all I had seen in the chapel, was a dream, like the execution and the murder. One thing seemed just as real and as likely as the other. Then I became uneasy in my bed, got up, and walked about the room, and wondered what in the world I should do, if Mr Clayton deprived me of my situation, and I was thrown out of bread again. Then I recollect ed his many hints concerning fidelity and friendship, and what he had said about my being in no danger so long as I was faithful, and the rest of it; and then I wished I had thrown myself over Blackfriars' Bridge as I had intended,

and so put an end to all the trials that beset my path. But this wish was scarcely felt before it was regretted and checked at once. Mr Clayton had taught me wisdom, which his own bad conduct could not sully or affect. It was not because, under the garb of religion, he concealed the tainted soul of the hypocrite, that religion was not still an angel of light, of purity, and loveliness. Her consolations were not less sweet —her promises not less sure. It would have been an unsound logic that should have argued, from the sinfulness of the minister, the falseness of that faith whose simple profession, and nothing more, alas ! had been enough to hide foulest deformity. No ! the vital spark that Mr Clayton had kindled, burned still steadily and clear. I could still see by its holy light the path of rectitude and duty, and thank God the while, that in the hour of temptation he gave me strength to resist evil, and the faculty of distinguishing aright between *the unshaken testimony* and *the unfaithful witness*. I did not, upon reflection, regret that I had not recklessly destroyed myself; but I prayed on my knees for direction and help in the season of difficulty and disappointment through which I was now passing.

Thompson came early on the following day, punctual to his appointment. He was accompanied by poor Bunyan Smith, and a voluminous statement of his affairs. I looked over them as well as I was able; for the unfortunate man was all excitement, and, faithful to the description of Thompson, sanguine in

the extreme. He interrupted me twenty times, and, as every new speculation turned up, had still something to say why it had not succeeded according to his wishes. Although he had failed in every grand experiment, there was not one which would not have realized his hopes a hundredfold, but for the occurrence of some unfortunate event which it was impossible to foresee, but which could not possibly take place again, had he but money to renew his trials. His bankruptcy had not subdued him, nor in the least diminished his belief in the efficacy of his great discoveries. There was certainly no appearance of fraud in the account of his transactions; but it was not Mr Smith's innocence I was anxious to establish. It was the known guilt of Mr Clayton that I would have made any sacrifice to remove.

It was in the afternoon that Thompson and I were walking along the well-filled pavement of Cheapside, on our way to what he called "the best witness he could bring to speak in favour of all that he had said about the minister." He still persisted in keeping up a mystery in respect of this same witness. "He might be, after all," he said, "mistaken in the thing, and he didn't wish to be made a fool of. I don't expect I shall, but we shall see." We reached Cornhill, and were opposite the Exchange.

"That's a rum place, isn't?" asked Thompson, looking at the building — "Have you ever been inside?"

"Never," I replied.

"Suppose we just stroll in then? What a row they are kicking up there! And what a crowd! There's hardly room to move."

The area was, as he said, crowded. There was a loud continued murmur of human voices. Traffic was intense, and had reached what might be supposed its acme. It seemed as if business was undergoing a paroxysm, or fit, rather than pursuing her steady, healthful course. Bodies of men were standing in groups—some were darting from corner to corner, pen in mouth—a few were walking leisurely with downcast looks—others quickly, uneasy and excited. A stout and well-contented gentleman or two leaned against the high pillars of the building, and formed the centre of a human circle, that smiled as he smiled, and stopped when he stopped.

"Nice place to study in, sir," said Thompson, as we walked along.

I smiled.

"I mean it though," said he. "I see a man now that comes here on purpose to study—as clever a man at his books as ever I saw, and as fine a fellow to talk as you know—there, just look across the road—under that pillar—near the archway. There, just where them two men has left a open space. Tell me, who do you see there, sir?"

"Why, MR CLAYTON!" I replied, astonished at the sight.

"Yes, and if you'll come here every day of your life, there you'll find him. I've watched him often, since Smith first put me up to his tricks, and I have never missed him. There he is making money, and wearing his soul out because he can't make half enough to satisfy his greedy maw. His covetousness is awful. There's nothing that he doesn't spekylate in; there's hardly a man of business in his congregation that he doesn't, either by himself or others, lend money out at usury. I mean such on 'em as he knows are right; for catch him, if he knows it, trusting the rotten brothers. Smith says he has got something to do with every one of the stocks. I don't know whether that is any thing to eat and drink or not; but I think they call this here bear-garden the Stock Exchange, and here the out-and-outer spends more than half his days."

Whilst Thompson spoke, one of the two men, whom I have mentioned as being for many hours together closeted with the minister in his private study, and whom I set down as missionaries—came up in great haste to Mr Clayton, and communicated to him news, apparently, of importance. The latter immediately produced a pocket-book, in which he wrote a few words with a pencil, and the individual departed. The information, whatever it may have been, had deeply affected the man to whom it had been brought. He did not stand still, as before, but walked nervously about, looked pale, care-worn, and miserably anxious. He referred to his book a dozen times—restored it

frequently to his pocket, and had it out again immediately for surer satisfaction, or for further calculations. In about ten minutes, "*the missionary*" returned. This time he was the bearer of a better tale. The minister smiled—his brow expanded, and his eye had the vivacity and fire that belonged to it in the pulpit. Another memorandum was written in the pocket-book, and the two gentlemen walked quickly, and side by side, along the covered avenue. I had seen sufficient.

"Let us go," I said to Thompson.

"Why, you don't mean to say you have had enough?" returned he; "oh, wait a bit, and see the other boy! They make a precious trio."

I declined to witness the melancholy spectacle any longer. I was oppressed, grieved, sickened at the sad presentation of humanity. What an overthrow was this! What a problem in the moral structure of man! I could not understand it. I had no power to enquire into it. Against all preconceived notions of possibility, there existed a palpable fact. What could reason do in a case in which the senses almost refused to acknowledge the evidence which they themselves had produced?

Thompson was delighted at the result of our "voyage of discovery," and continued to be facetious at the expense of the unhappy minister. I implored him to desist.

"Say no more, Thompson. This is no subject for

laughter. I have suffered much since your brother carried me to Birmingham. This is the hardest blow yet. I believe now that all is a dream. This is not Mr Clayton. It is a cheat of Satan. We are deluded and made fools in the hands of the Wicked One."

"You'll excuse me, sir," said Thompson; "but if I didn't know you better, I should say, to hear you talk in that uncommonly queer way, that you were as big a vessel as any of 'em. Don't flatter yourself you are dreaming, when you never were wider awake in all your life."

It is perhaps needless to say, that I had no heart to present myself again before my friend and benefactor—the once beloved, and still deeply compensated minister of religion. I pitied him on account of the passion which had overmastered him, and trembled for myself when I contemplated the ruins of such an edifice. But I could visit him no longer. What could I say to him? How should I address him? How could I bear to meet his eye?—I did not hate him sufficiently to inflict upon him the shame and ignominy of meeting mine. I avoided the house of Mr Clayton, and absented myself from his chapel. But I was not content with the first view that had been afforded me at the Exchange. I was unwilling to decide for ever upon the character of my former friend without a complete self-justification. I went again to the house of commerce, and alone. Again I

beheld Mr Clayton immersed in the doings of the place. For a week I continued my observation. Proofs of his worldliness and gross hypocrisy came fast and thick upon each other. I no longer doubted the statement of Thompson and the speculator Smith. I resolved upon seeing my preserver no more. I could not think of him without shuddering, and I endeavoured to forget him. One evening, about ten days after the chapel scene, sitting alone in my apartment, I was attracted by a slight movement on the stairs. A moment afterwards there was a knock at my door. The door opened, and Mr Clayton himself walked into the room. I trembled instantly from head to foot. The minister had a serious countenance, and was very placid. He took a chair, and I waited till he spoke.

“ You have not visited me of late, Caleb,” he began. “ You have surely forgotten me. You have forgotten your promise—our friendship—your obligations—gratitude—every thing. How is this ? ”

Still I did not speak.

“ Tell me,” he continued, “ who has taught you to become a spy? Who has taught you that it is honourable and just to track the movements and to break upon the privacy of others. I saw you in the Exchange this morning—I saw you yesterday—and the day before. Tell me, what took you there ? ”

I gave no answer.

“ Your Bible, Caleb, gives no encouragement to

the feeling which has prompted you to act thus. You have read the word of truth imperfectly. There is a holiness—a peculiar sanctity"—

"For Heaven's sake, Mr Clayton," I cried out, interrupting him, "do not talk so! Do not deceive yourself. Do not attempt to bewilder me. Do not provoke the wrath of Heaven. You have been kinder to me than I can express. The recollection of what you have done is ever present to me. Oh, would that I owed you nothing! Would that I could pay you back to the last farthing, and that the past could be obliterated from my mind! I would have parted with my life willingly, gladly, to serve you. Had you been poor, how delightful would it have been to labour for my benefactor! I will not deceive you. I have learned every thing. Such miserable knowledge never came to the ears of man, save in those regions where perdition is first made known and suffered everlastingily. I dare not distrust the evidence of my eyes and ears. The bitterest hour that I have known was that in which you fell, and I beheld you fall. Whom can I trust now? Whom shall I believe? To whom attach myself? Mr Clayton, it seems incredible to me that I can talk thus to you. It is indeed, and I tremble as I do so. But what is to be done? I can respect you no longer, however my poor heart throbs towards you, and pities"—

I burst into tears.

"Spare your pity, boy," said Mr Clayton coldly,

“and spare those hollow tears. You acknowledge that there exists a debt between us. Well, have you attempted to repay it? Listen to me. I have been your friend. I am willing to remain so. Come to me as before, and you shall find me as I have ever been—affectionate and kind. Avoid me—place yourself in the condition of my opponent, and *beware*. In a moment, by one word, I can throw you back into the slough from whence I dragged you. To-morrow morning, if I so will it, you shall wander forth again, an outcast, depending for your bread upon a road-side charity. It is a dreadful thing to walk a marked and branded man through this cold world; yet it is only for me to say the word, and *infamy* is attached to your name for ever. And what greater crime exists than black ingratitude? It is our duty to expose and punish it. It is for you to make the choice. If you are wise, you will not hesitate. If Christianity has worked”—

“Sir, what has *Christianity* to do with this? Satan must witness the compact that you would have us make. I cannot sell myself!”

“Your new companions have taught you these fine phrases, Caleb. They will support you, no doubt, and you will remain faithful to them, until a fresh acquaintance shall poison your ear against them, as they have corrupted it to win you from the man whom you have sworn to serve. I have nothing more to say. You promised to be faithful through good

report and evil. You have broken your plighted word. I forgive you, if you are sorry for the fault, and my arms are ready to receive you. Punishment shall follow—strict justice, and no mercy—if you persist in evil. Within a week present yourself at my abode, and every thing is forgotten and forgiven. I am your friend for ever. Do not come, be obstinate and unyielding, and prepare yourself for misery."

The minister left me. The week elapsed, and at the end of it I had not presented myself at his residence. But, in the meanwhile, I had been active in taking measures for the security of the office which I held, and whose duties I had hitherto performed to the perfect satisfaction of my employers. I had been given to understand that it remained with Mr Bombasty to continue my appointment, or to dismiss me at once; that he was in the hands of Mr Clayton; and that if the latter desired my dismissal, and could bring against me the shadow of a complaint to justify Mr Bombasty in the eye of the society, nothing could save me from ejection. It was proposed to me by a fellow-servant of the society, to place myself as soon as possible beyond the reach and influence of Mr Clayton. He advised me to secede at once from the church, and to attach myself to another, professing the same principles, and like that in connexion with the society. By this means, Clayton and I would be separated, and his power over me effectually removed. Exclusion was to me starvation, and I eagerly adopted

the counsel of my companion. To be, however, in a condition to join another church, it was necessary to procure, either by personal application, or at the instance of the minister of the new church, *a letter of dismission*, which letter should contain an assurance of the candidate's previous good conduct and present qualification. In my case, the minister himself proposed to apply for my testimonials. He did apply, and at the end of a month no answer had been returned to his communication. He wrote a second, and the second application met with no greater respect than the first. At length I received a very formal and polite letter from Mr Tomkins, informing me that "a church meeting had been convened for the purpose of considering the propriety of affording Brother Stukely the opportunity of joining another connexion, by granting him a letter of dismission," and that my presence was requested on that very important occasion.

If there was one thing upon earth more than another which at this particular time of my life I abominated with unmitigated and ineffable disgust, it was the frequent recurrence of these eternal church meetings. Nothing, however trifling, could be carried forward without them; no man's affairs, however private and worldly, were too uninteresting for their investigation. My connexion with the church had hardly commenced before two had taken place, principally on my account, and now a third was

proposed in order to enable the minister to write a letter of civility, and to state the simple fact of my having conducted myself with propriety and decorum. Still it was proper that I should attend it; I did so, accompanied by Thompson, and a crowded assembly, as befitted the occasion, welcomed us amongst them with many short coughs and much suppressed hissing. There was the usual routine. The hymn, the portion of Scripture, and the prayer of Brother Buster. In the latter, there were many dark hints that were intended to be appropriate to my case, and were, to all appearance, well understood by the congregation at large. They did not frighten me. I was guilty of no crime against their church. They could bring no charge against me. The prayer concluded, Mr Clayton coldly requested me to retire. I did so. I passed into the vestry, which was separated from the main building by a very thin partition, that enabled me to hear every word spoken in the chapel. Mr Clayton began. He introduced his subject by lamenting, in the most feeling terms, the unhappy state of the brother who had just departed from the congregation—(the crocodile weeping over the fate of the doomed wretch he was about to destroy!) He had hoped great things of him. He had believed him to be a child of God. It was not for him to judge their brother now; but this was a world of disappointment, and the fairest hopes were blasted, even as the rose withereth beneath the canker. They all knew—it

was not for him to disguise or hide the fact—that their brother had not realized the ardent expectations that one and all had formed of him. Their brother himself carried about with him this miserable consciousness; and under such circumstances it was that he proposed to withdraw from their communion, and to receive a dismission that should entitle him to a seat elsewhere. It was for them to consider how far they were justified in complying with his request. As for himself, he was sorely distressed in spirit. His carnal heart urged him to listen to the desire of his brother in the flesh, and that heart warred with his spiritual conviction. To be charitable was one thing, to involve one's self in guilt, to encourage sinfulness, and to reward backsliding—oh, surely, this was another! He had no right in his high capacity to indulge a personal affection. It was his glory that he could sacrifice it at the call of duty. Accordingly, in the answer to the application that he had received, he had humbly attempted rather to embody the views of the church, than the suggestions of his own weak bosom. That answer he would now submit to them, and their voice must pronounce upon its justice. He did not fear for them. They were highly privileged; they had been wonderfully directed hitherto, and they would, adorned as they were with humility and faith, be directed even unto the end.

“Ha-men!” responded Buster very audibly, and the minister forthwith proceeded to his letter.

It was my honour to be represented in it as a person but too likely to disturb the peace of any church ; whose conduct, however exemplary on my first joining the congregation, had lately been such as to give great reason to fear that I had been suddenly deprived of all godliness and grace ; who had caused the brethren great pain ; and whom recent circumstances had especially rendered an object of suspicion and alarm. There was much more to the same effect. There was no distinct charge—nothing tangible, or of which I could defy them to the proof. All was dark doubt and murderous innuendo. There was nothing for which I could claim relief from the laws of my country—more than enough to complete my ruin. I burned with anger and indignation ; forgot every thing but the cold-blooded designs of the minister ; and, stung to action by the imminent danger in which I stood, I rushed at once from the vestry into the midst of the congregation. Thompson was already on his legs, and had ventured something on my behalf, which had been drowned in loud and universal clamour. Silence was, in a measure, restored by my appearance, and I took the opportunity to demand from the minister a perusal of the letter that had just been read.

He scowled upon me with a natural hate, and refused to comply with my request.

“ What ! ” I asked aloud, “ am I denied the privilege that is extended to the vilest of his species ?

Will you condemn me unheard? Accuse me in my absence—keep me in ignorance of my charge—and stab me in the dark?"

I received no answer, and then I turned to the congregation. I implored them—little knowing the men to whom I trusted my appeal—to save me from the persecution of a man who had resolved upon my downfall. I asked nothing from them, from him, but the liberty of gaining, by daily labour, an honourable subsistence. Would they deny it me?"—

I was interrupted by groans and hisses, and loud cries of "Yes, yes!" from Brother Buster.

I addressed the minister again.

"Mr Clayton," said I, "beware how you tread me down. Beware how you drive me to desperation. Cruel, heartless man! What have I done that you should follow me with this relentless spite? Can you sleep? Can you walk and live without the fear of a punishment adequate to your offence? Let me go. Be satisfied that I possess the power of exposing unheard-of turpitude and hypocrisy, and that I refrain from using it. Dismiss me; let me leave your sight for ever, and you are safe—for me."

"Viper!" exclaimed the minister rising in his seat, "whom I have warmed and nourished in my bosom; viper! whom I took to my hearth, and kept there till the returning sense of life gave vigour to your blood and fresh venom to your sting! Is it thus you pay me back for food and raiment—thus you heap upon me

the expressions of a glowing gratitude!—with threats and deadly accusations? Spit forth your malice! Pile up falsehoods to the skies!—WHO WILL BELIEVE THE TALE OF PROBABILITY? Brethren! behold the man whose cause I pleaded with you—for whom my feelings had wellnigh mastered my better judgment. Behold him, and learn how hard it is to pierce the stony heart of him whose youth has passed in dissolute living, and in adultery. Shall I approach thy ear with the voice of her who cries from the grave for justice on her seducer? Look, my beloved, on the man whom I found discarded by mankind, friendless and naked, whom I clothed and fostered, and whom I brought in confidence amongst you. Look at him, and oh, be warned!"

The hissing and groaning were redoubled. Thompson rose a dozen times to speak, but a volley assailed him on each occasion, and he was obliged to resume his seat. He grew irritated and violent; and at length, when the public disapprobation had reached its height, and for the twenty and first time had cut short his address almost before he spoke, unable to contain himself any longer, he uttered at the top of his stentorian voice a fearful imprecation, and recommended to the care of a gentleman who had more to do with that society than was generally supposed—Mr Clayton, and every individual brother in the congregation.

Jabez Buster, after looking to the ceiling, and

satisfying himself that it had not fallen in, rose, dreadfully distressed.

"He had lived," he said, "to see sich sights and hear sich language as had made his nature groan within him. He could only compare their beloved minister to one of them there ancient martyrs who had died for conscience-sake before Smithfield was a cattle market; but he hoped he would have strength for the conflict, and that the congregation would help him to fight the good fight. He called upon 'em all now to do their duty, to exclude and excommunicate for ever the unrighteous brethren—and to make them over to Satan without further delay."

The shout with which the proposition was received, decided the fate of poor Thompson and myself. It was hardly submitted, before it was carried *nemine contradicente*; and, immediately afterwards, Thompson buttoned his coat in disgust, and was hooted out of the assembly. I followed him.

## PART XII.

## SAINTS AND SINNERS.

“ Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence  
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,  
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)  
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.”

COWPER.

THE history of my youth is the history of my life. My contemporaries were setting out on their journey when my pilgrimage was at an end. I had drained the cup of experience before other men had placed it to their lips. The vicissitudes of all seasons occurred in one; and, before my spring had closed, I had felt the winter's gloominess and cold. The scattered and separated experiences that diversify and mark the passage of the “threescore years and ten,” were collected and thrust into the narrow period of my nonage. Within that boundary existence was condensed. It was the time of action and of suffering. I have passed from youth to maturity, and decline gently and passively; and now, in the cool and quiet sunset, I repose, connected with the past only by the adhering memo-

ries that will not be excluded from my solitude. I have gathered upon my head the enduring snow of age; but it has settled there in its natural course, with no accompaniment of storm and tempest. I look back to the land over which I have journeyed, and through which I have been conveyed to my present humble resting-place, and I behold a broad extent of plain, spreading from my very feet into the hazy distance, where all is cloud, mountain, tumult, and agitation. Heaven be praised, I can look back with gratitude, chastened and informed !

Amongst all the startling and stirring events that crowded into the small division of time to which I refer, none had so confounded, perplexed, alarmed, and grieved me, as the discovery of Mr Clayton's criminality and falsehood. There are mental and moral concussions, which, like physical shocks, stun and stupify with their suddenness and violence. This was one of them. Months after I had been satisfied of his obliquity, it was difficult to *realize* the conviction that truth and justice authoritatively demanded. When I thought of the minister—when his form presented itself to my mind's eye, as it did, day after day, and hour after hour, it was impossible to contemplate it with the aversion and distaste which were the natural productions of his own base conduct. I could see nothing but the figure and the lineaments of him, whose eloquence had charmed, whose benevolent hand had nourished and maintained me. There are likewise,

in this mysterious state of life, paroxysms and intervals of disordered consciousness, which memory refuses to acknowledge or record; the epileptic's waking dream is one—an unreal reality. And similar to this was my impression of the late events. They lacked substantiality. Memory took no account of them, discarded them, and would connect the present only with the bright experience she had treasured up, prior to the dark distempered season. I could not hate my benefactor. I could not efface the image which months of apparent love had engraven on my heart.

Thrust from Mr Clayton's chapel, and unable to obtain admission elsewhere, I felt how insecure was my tenure of office. I prepared myself for dismissal, and hoped that, when the hour arrived, I should submit without repining. In the meanwhile, I was careful in the performance of every duty, and studious to give no cause, not the remotest, for complaint or dissatisfaction. It was not long, however, before signs of an altered state of things presented themselves to view. A straw tells which way the wind blows, and wisps began to fly in all directions. I found at length that I could do nothing right. To-day I was too indolent; to-morrow, too officious:—now I was too much of a gentleman; and now not half gentlemanly enough. The hardest infliction to bear was the treatment of my new friend and colleague—of him who had given me kind warning and advice, when mischief was only threatening; but who, on the first appearance of

trouble, took alarm, and deserted my side. The moment that he perceived my inevitable fate, he decided upon leaving me alone to fight my hard battle. At first he spoke to me with shyness and reserve; afterwards coolly, and soon he said nothing at all. Sometimes, perhaps, if we were quite alone, and there was no chance whatever of discovery, he would venture half a word or so upon the convenient subject of the weather; but these occasions were very rare. If a superior were present, hurricanes would not draw a syllable from his careful lips; and, under the eye of the stout and influential Mr Bombasty, it was well for me if frowns and sneers were the only exhibitions of rudeness on the part of my worldly and far-seeing friend. Ah, Jacob Whining! with all your policy and sagacious selfishness, you found it difficult to protract your own official existence a few months longer. He had hardly congratulated himself upon the dexterity which had kept him from being involved in my misfortunes, before *he* fell under the ban of *his* church, like me was persecuted, and driven into the world a branded and excommunicated outcast. Mr Whining, however, who had learned much in the world, and more in his *connexion*, was a cleverer and more fortunate man than his friend and coadjutor. He retired with his experience into Yorkshire, drew a small brotherhood about him, and in a short time became the revered and beloved founder of the numerous and far-spread sect of *Whiningtonians*!

It was just a fortnight after my expulsion from the *Church*, that matters were brought to a crisis as far as I was concerned, by the determined tone and conduct of the gentleman at the head of our society. Mr Bombasty arrived one morning at the office, in a perturbed and anxious state, and requested my attendance in his private room. I waited upon him. Perspiration hung about his fleshy face—he wiped it off, and then began :—

“ Young man,” said he, “ this won’t do at all.”

“ What, sir ?” I asked.

“ Come, don’t be impudent. You are done for, I can tell you.”

“ How, sir ?” I enquired. “ What have I done ?”

“ Where are the subscriptions that were due last Saturday ?”

“ Not yet collected, sir.”

“ What money have you belonging to the society ?”

“ Not a sixpence, sir.”

“ Young man,” continued the lusty president in a solemn voice, “ you are in a woful state; you are living in the world without *a security*.”

“ What is the matter, sir ?”

“ Matter !” echoed the gentleman.—“ Matter with a man that has lost his security ! Are you positive you have got no funds about you ? Just look into your pocket, my friend, and make sure.”

“ I have nothing, sir. Pray, tell me what I have done ?”

"Young man, holding the office that I hold, feeling as I feel, and knowing what I know, it would be perfect madness in me to have any thing to do with a man who has been given over by his security. Don't you understand me? Isn't that very good English? Mr Clayton will have nothing more to say to you. The society gives you warning."

"May I not be informed, sir, why I am so summarily dismissed?"

"Why, my good fellow, what is the matter with you? You seem remarkably stupid this morning. I can't beat about the bush with you. You must go."

"Without having committed a fault?" I added, mournfully.

"Sir," said the distinguished president, looking libraries at me, "when one mortal has become security for another mortal, and suddenly annuls and stultifies his bond, to say that the other mortal has committed a *fault* is just to call brandy—*water*. Sir," continued Mr Bombasty, adjusting his India cravat, "that man has perpetrated a crime—a crime *primy facey—exy fishio*."

I saw that my time was come, and I said nothing.

"If," said Mr Bombasty, "you had lost your intellect, I am a voluntary contributor, and could have got you chains and a keeper in Bedlam. If you had broken a limb, I am a life-governor, and it would have been a pleasure to me to send you to the hospital. But you may as well ask me to put life into a dead man,

as to be of service to a creature who has lost his security. You had better die at once. It would be a happy release. I speak as a friend."

"Thank you, sir," said I.

"I hear complaints against you, but I don't listen to them. Every thing is swallowed up in one remarkable fact. Your security has let you down. You must go about your business. I speak as the president of this Christian society, and not, I hope, without the feelings of a man. The treasurer will pay your salary immediately, and we dispense with your services."

"What am I to do?" I asked, half aloud.

"Just the best you can," answered the gentleman.  
"The audience is at an end."

Mr Bombasty said no more, but drew from his coat-pocket a snuff-box of enormous dimensions. From it he grasped between his thumb and finger a moderate handful of stable-smelling dust. His nose and India handkerchief partook of it in equal shares, and then he rang his bell with presidential dignity, and ordered up his customary lunch of chops and porter. A few hours afterwards I was again upon the world, ready to begin the fight of life anew, and armed with fifteen guineas for the coming struggle. Mr Clayton had kept his word with me, and did not desert me until I was once more fairly on the road to ruin.

One of the first consequences of my unlooked-for meeting with the faithful Thompson, was the repayment of the five shillings which he had so generously

spared me when I was about to leave him for Birmingham without as many pence in my scrip. During my absence, however, fortune had placed my honest friend in a new relation to a sum of this value. Five shillings were not to him, as before, sixty pence. The proprietor of the house in which he lived, and which he had found it so difficult to let out to his satisfaction, had died suddenly, and had thought proper to bequeath to his tenant the bulk of his property, amounting, perhaps, to five thousand pounds. Thompson, who was an upholsterer by trade, left the workshop in which he was employed as journeyman immediately, and began to work upon his own account. He was a prosperous and a thriving man when I rejoined him. His manner was, as the reader has seen, kind and straightforward as ever, and the only change that his wealth had wrought in him, was that which gold may be supposed to work in a heart alive to its duties, simple and honest in its intentions, and lacking only the means to make known its strong desire of usefulness. His generosity had kept pace with his success; his good wishes outstripped both. His home was finer, yet scarcely more sightly and happier than the one large room, which, with its complement of ten children, sire and dame, had still a nook for the needy and friendless stranger. The old house had been made over for a twelvemonth to the various tenants, free of all charge. At the end of that period it was the intention of Thompson to pull it down, and build a

better in its place. A young widow, with her three orphans, lodged on the attic floor, and the grateful prayers of the four went far to establish the buoyancy of the landlord's spirit, and to maintain the smile that seldom departed from his manly cheek. Well might the poor creature, whom I once visited in her happy lodging, talk of the sin of destroying so comfortable a residence, and feel assured, that "let them build a palace, they would never equal the present house, or make a sleeping-room where a body might rest so peacefully and well." Thompson's mode of life had scarcely varied. He was not idle amongst his men. When labour was suspended, he was with his children; another had been added to the number, and there were now eleven to relieve him of the superabundant profits created in the manufactory. Mrs Thompson was still a noble housewife, worthy of her husband. All was care, cleanliness, and economy at home. Griping stint would never have been tolerated by the hospitable master, and virtuous plenty only was admitted by the prudent wife. Had there been a oneness in the religious views of this good couple, *Paradise* would have been a word fit to write beneath the board that made known to men John Thompson's occupation; but this, alas! was wanting to complete a scene that otherwise looked rather like perfection. The great enemy of man seeks in many ways to defeat the benevolent aims of Providence. Thompson had remained at home one Sunday afternoon to smoke a friendly

pipe with an old acquaintance, when he should have gone to church. His wife set out alone. Satan took advantage of her husband's absence, drew her to chapel, and made her—a *dissenter*. This was Thompson's statement of the case, and severer punishment, he insisted, had never been inflicted on a man for Sabbath-breaking.

When I was dismissed by Mr Bombasty, it was a natural step to walk towards the abode of the upholsterer. I knew his hour for supper, and his long hour after that for ale, and pipe, and recreation. I was not in doubt as to my welcome. Mrs Thompson had given me a general invitation to supper, "because," she said, "it did Thompson good to chat after a hard day's work;" and the respected Thompson himself had especially invited me to the long hour afterwards, "because," he added, "it did the ale and 'baccy good, who liked it so much better to go out of this here wicked world in company." About seven o'clock in the evening I found myself under their hospitable roof, seated in the room devoted to the general purposes of the house. It was large, and comfortably furnished. The walls were of wainscot, painted white, and were graced with two paintings. One, a family group, consisting of Thompson, wife, and eight children, most wretchedly executed, was the production of a slowly rising artist, a former lodger of my friend's, who had contrived to compound with his easy landlord for two years and three quarters' rent, with this striking dis-

play of his ability. Thompson was prouder of this picture than of the originals themselves, if that were possible. The design had been his own, and had cost him, as he was ready and even anxious to acknowledge, more time and trouble than he had ever given before, or meant to give again, to any luxury in life. The artist, as I was informed, had endeavoured to reduce to form some fifty different schemes that had arisen in poor Thompson's brain, but had failed in every one, so difficult he found it to introduce the thousand and one effects that the landlord deemed essential to the subject. His first idea had been to bring upon the canvass every feature of his life from boyhood upwards. This being impracticable, he wished to bargain for at least the workshop and the private residence. The lodgers, he thought, might come into the back-ground well, and the tools, peeping from a basket in the corner, would look so much like life and nature. The upshot of his plans was the existing work of art, which Thompson considered matchless, and pronounced "dirt cheap, if he had even given the fellow a seven years' lease of the entire premises." The situations were striking certainly. In the centre of the picture were two high chairs, on which were seated, as grave as judges, the heads of the establishment. They sat there, drawn to their full height, too dignified to look at one another, and yet displaying a fond attachment, by a joining of the hands. The youngest child had clambered to the father's knee, and, with a

chisel, was digging at his nose, wonderful to say, without disturbing the stoic equanimity that had settled on the father's face. This was the favourite son. Another, with a plane larger than himself, was menacing the mother's knee. The remaining six had each a tool, and served in various ways to effect most artfully the beloved purpose of the vain upholsterer's heart—viz. the introduction of the entire workshop. The second painting in the centre of the opposite wall, represented Mr Clayton. The likeness was a failure, and the colours were coarse and glaring; but there needed no instruction to know that the carefully framed production attempted to portray the unenviable man, who, in spite of his immorality and shameless life, was still revered and idolized by the blind disciples who had taken him for their guide. This portrait was Mrs Thompson's peculiar property. There were no other articles of *vertu* in the spacious apartment; but cleanliness and decorum bestowed upon it a grace, the absence of which no idle decoration could supply. Early as the hour was, a sauce-pan was on the fire, whose bubbling water was busy with the supper that at half-past eight must meet the assault of many knives and forks. John Thompson and two sons—the eldest—were working in the shop. They had been there with little intermission since six that morning. The honest man was fond of work; so was he of his children—yes, dearly fond of *them*, and they must share with him the evening meal; and he must have them

all about him ; and he must help them all, and see them eat, and look with manly joy and pride upon the noisy youngsters, for whom his lusty arm had earned the bread that came like manna to him—so wholesome and so sweet ! Three girls, humbly but neatly dressed, the three first steps of this great human ladder, were seated at a table administering to the necessities of sundry shirts and stockings that had suffered sensibly in their last week's struggle through the world. *They* were indeed a picture worth the looking at. You grew a better man in gazing on their innocence and industry. What a lesson stole from their quiet and contented looks, their patient perseverance, their sweet unity ! How shining smooth the faces, how healthy, and how round, and how impossible it seemed for wrinkles ever to disturb the fine and glossy surface ! Modesty never should forsake the humble ; the bosom of the lowly born should be her home. Here she had enshrined herself, and given to simplicity all her dignity and truth. They worked and worked on ; who should tell which was the most assiduous—which the fairest—which the most eager and successful to increase the happiness of all ! And turn to Billy there, that half-tamed urchin ! that likeness in little of his sire, rocking not so much against his will, as against conviction, the last of all the Thompsons—a six months' infant in the wicker cradle. How, obedient to his mother's wish, like a little man at first, he rocks with all his might,

and then irregularly, and at long intervals—by fits and starts—and ceases altogether very soon, bobbing his curly head, and falling gently into a deep mesmeric sleep. The older lads are making wooden boats, and two, still older, stand on either side their mother. A book is in the hands of each, full of instruction and fine learning. It was the source of all their knowledge, the cause of all their earliest woes. Good Mrs Thompson had been neglected as a child, and was enthusiastic in the cause of early education. Sometimes they looked into the book, but oftener still they cast attentive eyes upon the fire, as if “the book of knowledge fair” was there displayed, and not a noisy saucepan, almost unable to contain itself for joy of the cod’s head and shoulders, that must be ready by John Thompson’s supper-time. The whole family were my friends—with the boys I was on terms of warmest intimacy, and smiles and nods, and shouts and cheers, welcomed me amongst them.

“Now, close your book, Bob,” said the mother, soon after I was seated, “and, Alec, give me yours. Put your hands down, turn from the fire, and look up at me, dears. What is the capital of Russia?”

“The Birman empire!” said Alec, with unhesitating confidence.

“The Baltic sea!” cried Bob, emulous and ardent.

“Wait—not so fast; let me see, my dears, which of you is right.”

Mrs Thompson appealed immediately to her book,

after a long and private communication with which, she emphatically pronounced both wrong.

"Give us a chance, mother," said Bob in a wheedling tone, (Bob knew his mother's weaknesses.) "Them's such hard words. I don't know how it is, but I never can remember 'em. Just tell us the first syllable—oh, do now—please!"

"Oh, I know now!" cried Alec. "It's something with a G in it."

"Think of the apostles, dears. What are the names of the apostles?"

"Why, there's Moses," began Bob, counting on his fingers, "and there's Sammywell, and there's Aaron, and Noah's ark"—

"Stop, my dear," said Mrs Thompson, who was very busy with her manual, and contriving a method of rendering a solution of her question easy. "Just begin again. I said—who was Peter—no, not that—who was an apostle?"

"Oh, I know now!" cried Alec again, (Alec was the sharp boy of the family.) "It's Peter. Peter's the capital of Russia!"

"No, not quite, my dear. You are very warm—very warm indeed, but not quite hot. Try again."

"Paul," half murmured Robert, with a reckless hope of proving right.

"No, Peter's right; but there's something else. What has your father been taking down the beds for?"

There was a solemn silence, and the three industrious sisters blushed the faintest blush that could be raised upon a maiden's cheek.

"To rub that stuff upon the walls," said the ready Alec.

"Yes, but what was it to kill?" continued the instructress.

"The fleas," said Bob.

"Worse than that, my dear."

"Oh, I know now!" shrieked Alec for the third time. "*Petersburg's* the capital of Russia!"

Mrs Thompson looked at me with pardonable vanity and triumph, and I bestowed upon the successful students a few comfits which I had purchased on my road for my numerous and comfit-loving friends. The mere sight of this sweet "reward of merit" immediately inspired the two boys at work upon the boats with a desire for knowledge, and especially for learning the capitals of countries, that was most agreeable to contemplate. The lesson was continued, more to my amusement, I fear, than the edification of the pupils. The boys were unable to answer a single question until they had had so many *chances*, and had become so very *hot*, that not to have answered at length would have bordered on the miraculous. The persevering governess was not displeased at this; for she would not have lost the opportunity of displaying her own skill in metaphorical illustration for a great deal, I am very sure. The clock struck eight; there was a general

movement. The three sisters folded their work, and lodged it carefully in separate drawers. The eldest then produced the table-cloth, knives, forks, and spoons. The second exhibited bibs and pinafores; and the third brought from their hiding-places a dozen modest chairs, and placed them round the table. Bob assured the company “he was *so* hungry ;” Alec said, “*so* was he ;” and the boatmen, in an under tone, settled what should be done with the great cod’s eyes, which, they contended, were the best parts of the fish, and “shouldn’t they be glad if father would give ‘em one a-piece.” The good woman must enquire, of course, how nearly the much-relished dainty had reached the critical and interesting state when it became most palatable to John Thompson; for John Thompson was an epicure, “and must have his little bits of things done to a charm, or not at all.” Half-past eight had struck. The family were bibbed and pinafored; the easy coat and slippers were at the fire, and warmed through and through—it was a season of intenseness. “Here’s father !” shouted Alec, and all the bibs and pinafores rushed like a torrent to the door. Which shall the father catch into his ready arms, which kiss, which hug, which answer?—all are upon him; they know their playmate, their companion, and best friend; they have hoarded up, since the preceding night, a hundred things to say, and now they have got their loving and attentive listener. “Look what I have done, father,” says the chief boatman, “Tom and

I together." "Well done, boys!" says the father—and Tom and he are kissed. "I have been locking baby," lisps little Billy, who, in return, gets rocked himself. "Father, "what's the capital of Russia?" shrieks Alec, tugging at his coat. "What do you mean, you dog?" is the reply, accompanied by a hearty shake of his long flaxen hair. "Petersbug!" cry Tom and Alec both, following him to the hearth, each one endeavouring to relieve him of his boots as soon as he is seated there. The family circle is completed. The flaky fish is ready, and presented for inspection. The father has served them all, even to little Billy—their plates are full and smoking. "Mother" is called upon to ask a blessing. She rises, and assumes the looks of Jabez Buster—twenty blessings might be asked and granted in half the time she takes—so think and look Bob, Alec, and the boatmen; but at length she pauses—the word is given, and further ceremony is dispensed with. In childhood, supper is a thing to look forward to, and to *last* when it arrives; but not in childhood, any more than in old age, can sublunary joys endure for ever. The meal is finished. A short half hour flies, like lightning, by. The children gather round their father; and in the name of all, upon his knees, he thanks his God for all the mercies of the day. Thompson is no orator. His heart is warm; his words are few and simple. The three attendant graces take charge of their brethren, detach them from their father's side, and conduct them to their beds. Happy

father ! happy children ! May Providence be merciful, and keep the grim enemy away from your fireside ! Let him not come now in the blooming beauty and the freshness of your loves ! Let him not darken and embitter for ever the life that is still bright, beautiful, and glorious in the power of elevating and sustaining thought that leads beyond it. Let him wait the matured and not unexpected hour, when the shock comes, not to crush, to overwhelm, and to annihilate, but to warn, to teach, and to encourage ; not to alarm and stagger the untaught spirit, but to bring to the subdued and long-tried soul its last lesson on the vanity and evanescence of its early dreams !

It is half-past nine o'clock. Thompson, his wife, and two eldest boys are present, and, for the first time, I have an opportunity to make known the object of my visit.

“ And so they have turned you off,” said Thompson, when I had finished. “ And who’s surprised at that ? Not I, for one. Missus,” continued he, turning to his wife, “ why haven’t you got a curtain yet for that ’ere pictur ? I can’t a-bear the sight of it.”

Mrs Thompson looked plaintively towards the painting, and heaved a sigh.

“ Ah, dear good man ! He has got his enemies,” said she.

“ Mrs Thompson !” exclaimed her husband, “ I have done with that good man from this day for’ards ; and I do hope, old ’ooman, that you’ll go next Sunday

to church with me, as we used to do afore you got that pictur painted."

"It's no good talking, Thompson," answered the lady, positively and firmly. "I can't sit under a cold man, and there's an end of it."

"There, that's the way you talk, missus."

"Why, you know, Thompson, every thing in the church is cold."

"No, not now, my dear—they've put up a large stove. You'll recollect you haven't been lately."

"Besides, do you think I can sit in a place of worship, and hear a man say '*Let us pray*' in the middle of the service, making a fool of one, as if we hadn't been praying all the time? As that dear and persecuted saint says, (turning to the picture,) it's a common assault to our understandings."

"Now, Polly, that's just always how you go off. If you'd only listen to reason, that could all be made out right in no time. The clergyman doesn't mean to say *Let us pray*, because he hasn't been praying afore;—what he means is—we have been praying all this time, and so we'll go on praying again—no, not again exactly—but don't leave off. That isn't what I mean either. Let me see—*Let us pray*. Oh, yes! Why—stay. Where is it he does say, *Let us pray*? There, I say, Stukely, you know it all much better than I do. Just make it right to the missus."

"It is not difficult," said I.

"Oh no, Mr Stukely, I daresay not!" added Mrs

Thompson, interrupting me. "Mr Clayton says, Satan has got his jany sarries abroad, and has a reason for every thing. It is very proper to say, too, I suppose, that it is an *imposition* when the bishops ordain the ministers? What a word to make use of! It's truly frightful!"

"Well, I'm blessed," exclaimed Thompson, "if I don't think you had better hold your tongue, old girl, about impositions; for sich oudacious robbers as your precious brothers is, I never come across since I was stopped that ere night, as we were courting, on Shooter's Hill! It's a system of imposition from beginning to end."

"Look to your Bible, Thompson; what does that say? Does that tell ministers to read their sermons? There can't be no truth and right feeling when a man puts down what he's going to say; the vital warmth is wanting, I'm sure. And then to read the same prayers Sunday after Sunday, till a body gets quite tired at hearing them over and over again, and finding nothing new! How can you improve an occasion if you are tied down in this sort of way."

"Did you ever see one of the brothers eat, Stukeley?" asked Thompson, avoiding the main subject. "Don't you ask one of them to dinner—that's all. That nice boy Buster ought to eat for a wager. I had the pleasure of his company to dinner one fine afternoon. I don't mean to send him another invitation just yet, at all events."

"Yes," proceeded the fair, but stanch non-conformist; "what does the Bible say, indeed! 'Take no thought of what you should say?' Why, in the church, I am told they are doing nothing else from Monday morning to Saturday night but writing the sermon they are going to read on the Sabbath. To *read* a sermon! What would the apostles say to that?"

"Why, didn't you tell me, my dear, that the gentleman as set for that pictur got all his sermons by heart before he preached 'em?"

"Of course I did—but that's a very different thing. Doesn't it all pour from him as natural as if it had come to him that minute? He doesn't fumble over a book like a schoolboy. His beautiful eyes, I warrant you, ain't looking down all the time, as if he was ashamed to hold 'em up. Isn't it a privilege to see his blessed eyes rolling all sorts of ways; and don't they speak volumes to the poor benighted sinner? Besides, don't tell me, Thompson; we had better turn Catholics at once, if we are to have the minister dressing up like the Pope of Rome, and all the rest of it."

"You are the gal of my heart!" exclaimed the uxorious Thompson; "but I must say, you have got some of the disgracefulest notions out of that ere chapel as ever I heard on. Why, it's only common decency to wear a dress in the pulpit; and I believe in my mind, that that's come down to us from time

immemorable, like every thing else in human natur.  
What's your opinion, Stukely?"

" Yes; and what's your opinion, Mr Stukely," added the lady immediately, " about calling a minister of the gospel—a *priest*? Is that Paperistical or not?"

" That isn't the pint, Polly," proceeded John. " We are talking about the silk dress now. Let's have that out first."

" And then the absolution"—

" No, Poll. Stick to the silk dress."

" Ah, Thompson, it's always the way!" continued the mistress of the house, growing red and wroth, and heedless of the presence of the eager-listening children; " it's always the way. Satan is ruining of you. You'll laugh at the elect, and you'll not find your mistake out till it's too late to alter. Mr Clayton says that the Establishment is the hothouse of devils; and the more I see of its ways, the more I feel he is right. Thompson, you are in the sink of iniquity."

" Come, I can't stand no more of this!" exclaimed Thompson, growing uneasy in his chair, but without a spark of ill-humour. Let's change the topic, old 'ooman; I'm sure it can't do the young uns any good to hear this idle talk. Let's teach 'em nothing at all, if we can't larn 'em something better than wrangling about religion. Now, Jack," he continued, turning to his eldest boy, " what is the matter with you?

What are you sitting there for with your mouth wide open?"

" What's the meaning of Paperist, father?" asked the boy, who had been long waiting to propose the question.

" What's that to you, you rascal?" was the reply; " mind your own business, my good fellow, and leave the Paperist to mind his'n ; that's your father's maxim, who got it from his father before him. You'll learn to find fault with other people fast enough without my teaching you. I tell you what, Jack, if you look well after yourself, you'll find little time left to bother about others. If your hands are ever idle—recollect you have ten brothers and sisters. Look about you—you are the oldest boy—and see what you can do for them. Do you mind that?"

" Yes, father."

" Very well, old chap. Then just get out the bottle, and give your father something to coax the cod down. Poll, that fish won't settle."

The long hour was beginning. That bottle was the signal. A gin-and-water nightcap, on this occasion, officiated for the ale. Jack and his brother received a special invitation to a sip or two, which they at once unhesitatingly accepted. The sturdy fellows shook their father and fellow-labourer's hand, and were not loth to go to rest. Their mother was their attendant. The ruffle had departed from her

face. It was as pleasant as before. She was but half a dissenter. So Thompson thought when he called her back again, and bade his "old 'ooman give her hobby one of her good old-fashioned busses, and think no more about it."

Thompson and I were left together.

"And what do you mean to do, sir, now?" was his first question.

"I hardly know," I answered.

"Of course, you'll cut the gang entirely—that's a nat'ral consequence."

"No, Thompson, not at present. I must not seem so fickle and inconstant. I must not seem so to myself. I joined this sect not altogether without deliberation. I must have further proof of the unsoundness of its principles. A few of its professors have been faithless even to their own position. Of what religious profession may not the same be said? I will be patient, and examine further."

"I was a-thinking," said Thompson musingly—"I was a-thinking, till you've got something else to do —but no, never mind, you won't like that."

"What is it?"

"Why, I was thinking about the young uns. They're shocking back'ard in their eddication, and, between you and me, the missus makes them back'ar-der. I don't understand the way she has got of larning 'em at all. I don't want to make scholards of 'em. Nobody would but a fool. Bless 'em, they'll

have enough to do to get their bread with sweating and toiling, without addling their brains about things they can't understand. But it is a cruelty, mind you, for a parent to hinder his child from reading his Bible on a Sunday afternoon, and to make him stand ashamed of himself before his fellow-workmen when he grows up, and finds that he can't put *paid* to a bill on a Saturday night. The boys should all know how to read and write, and keep accounts, and a little summut of human nature. This is what I wants to give 'em, and nobody should I like better to put it into 'em than you, my old friend, if you'd just take the trouble 'till you've got something better to do."

"Thompson," I answered instantly, "I will do it with pleasure. I ought to have made the offer. It did not occur to me. I shall rejoice to repay you, in this trifling way, for all your good feeling and kindness."

"Oh no!" answered my friend, "none of that. We must have an understanding. Don't you think I should have asked the question, if I meant to sneak out in that dirty sort of way. No, that won't do. It's very kind of you; but we must make all that right. We sha'n't quarrel, I daresay. If you mean you'll do it, I have only just a word or two to say before you begin."

"I shall be proud to serve you, Thompson, and on any terms you please."

"Well, it is a serving me—I don't deny it; but,

mind you, only till you have dropped into something worth your while. What I wish to say is as this:— As soon as ever my missus hears of what you are going to do, I know as well what she'll be at as I know what I am talking of now. She'll just be breaking my heart to have the boys larned French. Now, I'd just as soon bind 'em apprentice to that 'ere Clayton. I've seen too much of that 'ere sort of thing in my time. I'm as positive as I sit here, that when a chap begins to talk French he loses all his English spirit, and feels all over him as like a mounseer as possible. I'm sure he does. I've seen it a hundred times, and that I couldn't a-bear. Besides, I've been told that French is the language the thieves talk, and I solemnly believe it. That's one thing. Now, here's another. You'll excuse me, my dear fellow. In course you know more than I do; but I must say that you have got sometimes a very roundabout way of coming to the pint. I mean no offence, and I don't blame you. It's all along of the company you have kept. You are—it's the only fault you have got—you are oudaciously fond of hard words. Don't let the young uns larn 'em. That's all I have to say, and we'll talk of the pay some other time."

At this turn of the conversation, Thompson insisted upon my lighting a pipe and joining him in the gin and water. We smoked for many minutes in silence. My friend had unbuttoned his waistcoat, and had drawn the table nearer to his warm and hospitable

fire. A log of wood was burning slowly and steadily away, and a small, bright—very bright—copper kettle overlooked it from the hob. My host had fixed his feet upon the fender—the unemployed hand was in his corduroys. His eyes were three parts closed, enjoying what from its origin may be called—a pure tobacco-born soliloquy. The smoke arose in thin white curls from the clay cup, and at regular periods stole blandly from the corner of his lips. The silent man was blessed. He had been happy at his work; he had grown happier as the sun went down; his happiness was ripening at the supper-table; *now*, half asleep and half awake—half conscious and half dreaming—wholly free from care, and yet not free from pregnant thought—the labourer had reached the summit of felicity, and was at peace—intensely.

A few evenings only had elapsed after this interesting meeting, before I was again spending a delicious hour or two with the simple-hearted and generous upholsterer. There was something very winning in these moments snatched and secured from the hurricane of life, and passed in thorough and undisturbed enjoyment. My friend, notwithstanding that he had engaged my services, and was pleased to express his satisfaction at the mode in which I rendered them, was yet alive to my interests, and too apprehensive of injuring them by keeping me away from loftier employment. He did not like my being *thrown out* of the chapel, especially after he had heard my deter-

mination not to forsake immediately the sect to which I had attached myself. He was indifferent to his own fate. His worldly prospects could not be injured by his expulsion ; on the contrary, he slyly assured me that “ his neighbours would begin to think better of him, and give him credit for having become an honester and more trustworthy man.” But with regard to myself it was a different thing. I should require “ a character ” at some time or another, and there was a body of men primed and ready to vilify and crush me. He advised me, whilst he acknowledged it was a hard thing to say, and “ it went agin him to do it,” to apply once more respectfully for my dismission. “ It won’t do,” he pertinently said, “ to bite your nose off to be revenged on your tongue.” I was certainly in a mess, and must get out of it in the best way that I could. Buster and Tomkins had great power in *the Church*, and if I represented my case to either or both of them, he did hope they might be brought to consent not to injure me, or stand in the way of my getting bread. “ In a quarrel,” he said, in conclusion, “ some one must give in. I was a young man, and had my way to make, and though he should despise hisself if he recommended me to do any thing mean and dirty in the business, yet he thought, as the father of a numerous family, he ought to advise me to be civil, and to do the best for myself in this unfortunate dilemmy.”

I accepted his advice, and determined to wait upon

the dapper deacon. I was physically afraid to encounter Buster, not so much on account of what I had seen of his spiritual pretension, as of what I had heard of his domestic behaviour. It was not a very difficult task to obtain from Mrs Thompson the secret history of many of her highly privileged acquaintances and brethren. She enjoyed, in a powerful degree, the peculiar virtue of her amiable sex, and to communicate secrets, delivered to her in strictest confidence, and imparted by her again with equal caution and provisory care, was the choicest recreation of her well employed and useful life. It was through this lady that I was favoured with a glance into the natural heart of Mr Buster; or into what he would himself have called, with a most unfilial disgust, “**HIS OLD MAN.**” It appeared that, like most great *actors*, he was a very different personage before and behind the curtain. Kings, who are miserable and gloomy through the five acts of a dismal tragedy, and who must needs die at the end of it, are your merriest knaves over a tankard at the Shakspeare’s Head. Your stage fool shall be the dullest dog that ever spoiled mirth with sour and discontented looks. Jabez Buster, his employment being over at Mr Clayton’s theatre, his dress thrown aside, his mask put by, was not to be recognised by his nearest friend. This is the perfection of art. A greater tyrant on a small scale, with limited means, never existed than the saintly Buster when his character was done, and he found himself

again in the bosom of his family. Unhappy bosom was it, and a sad flustration did his presence, nine times out of ten, produce there. He had four sons, and a delicate creature for a wife, born to be crushed. The sons were remarkable chiefly for their hypocrisy, which promised, in the fulness of time, to throw their highly-gifted parent's far into the shade ; and secondarily, for their persecution of their helpless and indulgent mother. They witnessed and approved so much the success of Jabez in this particular, that during his absence they cultivated the affectionate habit until it became a kind of second nature, infinitely more racy and agreeable than the primary. In proportion to their deliberate oppression of their mother, was their natural dread and terror of their father. Mrs Thompson pronounced it the shockingest thing in this world to be present when the young blue-beards were worritting their mother's soul out with saying, '*I sha'n't*' and '*I won't*' to every thing, and swearing '*they'd tell their father this*', '*and put him up to that*', '*and then wouldn't he make a jolly row about it*' ; with hollering out for nothing at all, only to frighten the poor timid cretur, and then making a holabaloo with the chairs, or perhaps falling down, roaring and kicking, just to drive the poor thing clean out of her wits, on purpose to laugh at her for being so taken in. Well, but it was a great treat, too," she added, "to hear, in the midst of all this, Buster's heavy foot in the passage, and to see what a scrimmage there was at once amongst

all the young hypocrites. How they all run in different directions—one to the fire—one to the table—one out at the back-door—one any where he could—all of 'em as silent as mice, and afear'd of the very eye of the blacksmith, who knew, good man, how to keep everyman Jack of 'em in order, and, if a word didn't do, wasn't by no means behind-hand with blows. "Buster," she continued, "had his faults like other men, but he was a saint if ever there was one. To be sure he did like to have his own way at home, and wasn't it natural? And if he was rather overbearing and cruel to his wife, wasn't that, she should like to know, Satan warring with the new man, and sometimes getting the better of it? And if he was, as Thompson had hinted, rayther partial to the creature, and liked good living, what was this to the purpose? it was an infirmity that might happen to the best Christian living. Nobody could say that he wasn't a renewed man, and a chosen vessel, and faithful to his call. A man isn't a back-slidder because he's carnally weak, and a man isn't a saint because he's moral and well-behaved. 'Good works,' Mr Clayton said, 'was filthy rags;' and so they were. To be sure, between themselves, there were one or two things said about Buster that she couldn't approve of. For instance, she had been told—but *this* was quite in confidence, and really must *not* go further—that he was—that—that in fact he was overtaken now and then with liquor, and then the house could hardly hold him he got so furious, and, they

did say, used such horrid language. But, after all, what was this? If a man's elected, he is not so much the worse. Besides, if one listened to people, one might never leave off. She had actually heard, she wouldn't say from whom, that Buster very often kept out late at night—sometimes didn't come home at all, and sometimes did at two o'clock in the morning, very hungry and ill-tempered; and then forced his poor wife out of bed, and made the delicate and shivering creature light a fire, cook beef-steaks, go into the yard for beer, and wait upon him till he had even eat every morsel up. She for one would never believe all this, though Mrs Buster herself had told her every word with tears in her eyes, and in the greatest confidence; so she trusted I wouldn't repeat it, as it wouldn't look well in her to be found out telling other people's secrets." Singular, perhaps, to say, the tale did not go further. I kept the lady's secret, and at the same time declined to approach Mr Jabez Buster in the character of a suppliant. If his advocate and panegyrist had nothing more to say for him, it could not be uncharitable to conclude that the pretended saint was as bold a sinner as ever paid infamous courtship to religion, and as such was studiously to be avoided. I turned my attention from him to Tomkins. There was no grossness about him, no brutality, no abominable vice. In the hour of my defeat and desertion, he had extended to me his sympathy, and more in sorrow than in anger, I am convinced, he voted for my expul-

sion from the church when he found that his vote, and twenty added to it, would not have been sufficient to protect me. He could not act in opposition to the wishes of his friend and patron, Mr Clayton; but very glad would he have been, as every word and look assured me, to meet the wishes of us both, had that been practicable. If the great desire of Jehu Tomkins's heart could have been gratified, he never would have been at enmity with a single soul on earth. He was a soft, good-natured, easy man; most desirous to be let alone, and not uneasily envious or distressed to see his neighbours jogging on, so long as he could do his own good stroke of business, and keep a little way before them. Jehu was a Liberal too—in politics and in religion: in every thing, in fact, but the one small article of *money*, and here, I must confess, the good dissenter dissented little from the best of us. He was a stanch Conservative in matters connected with the *till*. For his private life it was exemplary—at least it looked so to the world, and the world is satisfied with what it sees. Jehu was attentive to his business—yes, very—and a business life is not monotonous and dull, if it be relieved, as it was in this case, by dexterous arts, that give an interest and flavour to the commonest pursuits. Sometimes a customer would die—a natural state of things, but a great event for Jehu. First, he would “improve the occasion” to the surviving relatives—condole and pray with them. Afterwards he would *improve* it to himself, in his own little

room at night, when all the children were asleep, and no one was awake but Mrs Tomkins and himself. Then he would get down his ledger, and turn to the deceased's account—

“ — How *long* it is thou see'st,  
And he would gaze 'till it became *much longer* ; ”

“ For who could tell whether six shirts or twelve were bought in July last ; and what could be the harm of making those eight handkerchiefs a dozen ? He was a strange old gentleman ; lived by himself—and the books might be referred to, and speak boldly for themselves.” Yes, cunning Jehu, so they might; with those interpolations and erasures that would confound and overcome a lawyer. When customers did not die, it was pastime to be dallying with the living. In adding up a bill with haste, how many times will four and four make *nine* ? They generally did with Jehu. The best are liable to errors. It cost a smirk or smile ; Jehu had hundreds at command, and the accident was amended. How easy is it sometimes to give no bill at all ! How very easy to apply, a few months afterwards, for second payment ; how much more easy still to pocket it without a word ; or, if discovered and convicted, to apologize without a blush for the *mistake* ! No, Jehu Tomkins, let me do you justice—this is not so easy—it requires all your zeal and holy intrepidity to reach this pitch of human frailty and corruption. With regard to the domestic position of my interesting friend,

it is painful to add, that the less that is said about it the better. In vain was his name in full, painted in large yellow letters, over the shop front. In vain was *Bo<sup>t</sup>. of Jehu Tomkins* engraven on satin paper, with flourishes innumerable beneath the royal arms; he was no more the master of his house than was the small boy of the establishment, who did the dirty work of the place for nothing a-week and the broken victuals. If Jehu was deacon abroad, he was taught to acknowledge an *archdeacon* at home—one to whom he was indebted for his success in life, and for reminding him of that agreeable fact about four times during every day of his existence. I was aware of this delicate circumstance when I ventured to the linen-draper's shop on my almost hopeless mission; but, although I had never spoken to Mrs Tomkins, I had often seen her in the chapel, and I relied much on the feeling and natural tenderness of the female heart. The respectable shop of Mr Tomkins was in Fleet Street. The establishment consisted of Mrs Tomkins *première*; Jehu, under secretary; and four sickly-looking young ladies behind the counter. It is to be said, to the honour of Mrs Tomkins, that she admitted no young woman into her service whose character was not *decided*, and whose views were not very clear. Accordingly, the four young ladies were members of the chapel. It is pleasing to reflect, that, in this well-ordered house of business, the ladies took their turns to attend the weekly prayer-meetings of the

church. Would that I might add, that they were *not* severally met on these occasions by their young men at the corner of Chancery Lane, and invariably escorted by them some two or three miles in a totally opposite direction. Had Mrs Tomkins been born a man, it is difficult to decide what situation she would have adorned the most. She would have made a good man of business—an acute lawyer—a fine casuist—a great divine. Her attainments were immense; her self-confidence unbounded. She was a woman of middle height, and masculine bearing. She was not prepossessing notwithstanding her white teeth and large mouth, and the intolerable grin that a customer to the amount of a halfpenny and upwards could bring upon her face under any circumstances, and at any hour of the day. Her complexion might have been good originally. Red blotches scattered over her cheek had destroyed its beauty. She wore a modest and becoming cap, and a gold eyeglass round her neck. She was devoted to money-making—heart and soul devoted to it during business hours. What time she was not in the shop, she passed amongst dissenting ministers, spiritual brethren, and deluded sinners. It remains to state the fact, that, whilst a customer never approached the lady without being repelled by the offensive smirk that she assumed, no dependent ever ventured near her without the fear of the scowl that sat naturally (and fearfully when she pleased) upon her dark and inauspicious brow. What

wonder that little Jehu was crushed into nothingness, behind his own counter, under the eye of his own wife !

It was not without misgiving that I knocked modestly at the door of Mr Jehu Tomkins. For himself, there was no solidity in his moral composition—nothing to grapple or rely upon. He was a small weak man, of no character at all; and but for his powerful wife and active partner, would have become the smallest of unknown quantities in the respectable parish that contained him. Upon his own weak shoulders he could not have sustained the burden of an establishment, and must inevitably have dwindled into the lightest of light porters, or the most aged of errand-boys. Nothing could have saved him from the operation of a law, as powerful and certain as that of gravitation, in virtue of which the soft and empty-headed of this world walk to the wall, and resign, without a murmur, their places to their betters. As for the deaconess, I have said already that the fact of her being a lady, and the possessor of a heart, constituted the only ground of hope that I could have in reference to her. This I felt to be insecure enough when I held the knocker in my hand, and remembered all at once the many little tales that I had heard, every one of which went far to prove that ladies may be ladies without the generous weakness of their sex—and carry hearts about with them as easily as they carry bags.

My first application was unsuccessful. The deacon was not at home. “Mr Tomkins and his lady had gone *to hear* the Reverend Doctor Whitefroth,”—a northern and eccentric light, now blazing for a time in the metropolis. It is a curious fact, and worthy to be recorded, that Mr Tomkins and Mr Buster, and every nonconformist whom I had hitherto encountered, never professed to visit the house of prayer with any other object than that of *hearing*. It was never by any accident to worship or to pray. What, in truth, was the vast but lowly-looking building, into which hundreds crowded with the dapper deacon at their head, Sabbath after Sabbath—what but a temple sacred to vanity and excitement, eloquence and perspiration ! Which one individual, taken at random from the concourse, was not ready to declare, that his business there that day was “to hear the dear good man,” and nothing else ? If you could lay bare—as, thank Heaven, you cannot!—your fellow-creature’s heart, whither would you behold stealing away the adoration, that, in such a place, in such a time, is due to one alone—whither, if not to Mr Clayton ? But let this pass.

I paid a second visit to my friend, and gained admittance. It was about half-past eight o’clock in the evening, and the shop had been closed some twenty minutes before. I was ushered into a well-furnished room behind the shop, where sat the firm—

Mrs Jehu and the junior partner. The latter looked into his lady's face, perceived a smile upon it, and then—but not till then—he offered me his hand, and welcomed me with much apparent warmth. This ceremony over, Mr Tomkins grew fidgety and uneasy, and betrayed a great anxiety to get up a conversation which he had not heart enough to set a-going. Mrs Tomkins, a woman of the world, evinced no anxiety at all, sat smiling, and in peace. I perceived immediately that I must state at once the object of my visit, and I proceeded to the task.

“Mrs Tomkins,” I commenced.

“Sir?” said that lady, and then a postman’s knock brought us to a stop, and Jehu skipped across the room to listen at the door.

“That’s him, my dear Jemima!” exclaimed the linen-draper; “I know his knock,” and then he skipped as quickly to his chair again.

The door of the apartment was opened by a servant girl, who entered the room alone, and approached her mistress with a card. Mrs Tomkins looked at it through her eyeglass, said “she was most happy,” and the servant then retired. The card was placed upon the table near me, and, as I believe, for my inspection. I took it up and read the following words, “*Mr Stanislaus Levisohn.*” They were engraven in the centre of the paper, and were surrounded by a circle of rays, which in its turn was enveloped in a

circle of clouds. In the very corner of the card, and in very small characters, the words "*general merchant*" were written.

There was a noise of shoe-cleaning outside the door for about five minutes, then the door was opened again by the domestic, and a remarkable gentleman walked very slowly in. He was a tall individual, with small cunning eyes, black eyebrows, and a beard. He was rather shabbily attired, and not washed with care. He had thick boorish hands, and he smelt unpleasantly of tobacco smoke; an affected grin, at variance with every feature, was planted on his face, and sickened an unprejudiced observer at the very first gaze. His mode of speaking English betrayed him for a foreigner. He was a native of Poland. Before uttering a syllable, the interesting stranger walked to a corner of the room, turned himself to the wall, and muttered a few undistinguishable words; he then bowed lowly to the company, and took a chair, grinning all the while.

"Is that a Polish move?" asked Mr Tomkins.

"It vos de cushtom mit de anshent tribes, my tear sare, vor alles tings, to recommend de family to de protection of de hevins. Vy not now mit all goot Christians?"

"Why not, indeed?" added Mrs Tomkins. "May I offer you a glass of raisin wine?"

"Tank you. For de shtomack's sake—yase."

A glass was poured out. It was but decent to offer

me another. I paid my compliments to the hostess and the gentlemen, and was about to drink it off, when the enlightened foreigner called upon me in a loud voice to desist.

“ Shtay, mein young friend—ve are not de heathen and de cannibal. It is our privilege to live in de Christian society mit de Christian lady. Ve most ask blessing—alvays—never forget—you excuse—vait tree minutes.”

It was not for me to protest against so pious a movement, albeit it presented itself somewhat inopportunely and out of place. Mr Levisohn covered his face with one hand, and murmured a few words. The last only reached me. It was “ Amen,” and this was rather heaved up in a sigh, than articulately expressed.

“ Do you like the wine ?” asked Jehu, as if he thought it superfine.

“ Yase, I like moch—especially de sherry and de port.”

Jehu smiled, but made no reply.

Mrs Tomkins supposed that port and sherry were favourite beverages in Poland ; but, for her part, she had found that nothing agreed so well with British stomachs as the native wines.

“ Ah ! my lady,” said the Pole, “ ve can give up very moch so long ve got British religions.”

“ Very true, indeed,” answered Mrs Tomkins.  
“ Pray, Mr Levisohn, what may be your opinion of

the lost sheep? Do you think they will come into the fold during our time?"

Before the gentleman replies, it may be proper to state on his behalf, that he had never given his questioner any reason to suppose that he was better informed on such mysterious subjects than herself. The history of his introduction into the family of the linen-draper is very short. He had been for some years connected with Mr Tomkins in the way of business; having supplied that gentleman with all the genuine foreign, but certainly English, perfumery, that was retailed with considerable profit in his over-nice and pious establishment. Mrs Tomkins, no less zealous in the cause of the church than that of her own shop, at length, and all on a sudden, resolved to set about his conversion, and to present him to the chapel as a brand plucked with her own hand from the burning. As a preliminary step, he was invited to supper, and treated with peculiar respect. The matter was gently touched upon, but discussion postponed until another occasion. Mr Levisohn being very shrewd, very needy, and enjoying no particular principles of morality and religion, perceived immediately the object of his hostess, met her more than halfway in her Christian purposes, and accepted her numerous invitations to tea and supper with the most affectionate readiness. Within two months he was received into the bosom of the church, and became as celebrated for the depth and

intensity of his belief, as for the earnestness and promptitude with which he attended the meetings of the brethren, particularly those in which eating and drinking did not constitute the least important part of the proceedings. Being a foreigner, he was listened to with the deepest attention, very often indeed to his serious annoyance; for his ignorance was awful, and his assurance, great as it was, not always sufficient to get him clear of his difficulties. His foreign accent, however, worked wonders for him, and, whenever too hard pressed, afforded him a secure and happy retreat. An unmeaning grin, and "*me not pronounce,*" had saved him from precipices, down which an Englishman, *cæteris paribus*, must unquestionably have been dashed.

"Vill dey come?" said Mr Levisohn, in answer to the question. "Yase, certainly, if dey like, I tink."

"Ah, sir! I fear you are a latitudinarian," said the lady.

"I hope Hevin, my dear lady, vill forgive me for dat, and all my wickedness. I am a shinner, I shtink!"

I looked at the converted gentleman at the same moment that Mrs Jehu assured him, that it would be a great thing if they were all as satisfied of their condition as he might be. "Your strong convictions of your worthlessness is alone a proof," she added, "of your accepted state."

"My lady," continued the humble Stanislaus, "I

am rotten, I am a tief, a blackguard, a swindler, a pickpocket, a housebreak, a sticker mit de knife. I vish somebody would call me names all de day long, because I forget sometime dat I am de nashty vurm of de creation. I tink I hire a boy to call me names, and make me not forget. Oh, my lady ! I always remember those fine words you sing—

‘ If I could read my title clear  
To manshions in de shkies,  
I say farevell to every fear,  
And vipe my veeping eyes.’ ”

“ That is so conscientious of you. Pray, my dear sir, is there an Establishment in Poland? or have you Independent churches?”

“ Ah, my dear lady, we have noting at all !”

“ Is it possible ?”

“ Yase, it is possible—it is true.”

“ Who could have thought it ! What ! Nothing ?”

“ Noting at all, my lady. Do not ask me again, I pray you. It is frightful to a goot Christian to talk dese tings.”

“ What is your opinion of the Arminian doctrine, Mr Stanislaus ?”

“ Do you mean de doctrine ?” enquired Stanislaus slowly, as though he found some difficulty in answering the question.

“ Yes, my dear sir.”

“ I tink,” said the gentleman after some delay, “ it would be very goot if were not for someting.”

" Dear me," cried Mrs Jehu, " that is so exactly my opinion ! "

" Den dere is noting more to be said about dat," continued Stanislaus, interrupting her; " and I hope you vill not ask dese deep questions, my dear lady, vich are not at all proper to be answered, and vich put me into de low spirits. Shall ve sing a hymn ? "

" By all means !" exclaimed the hostess, who immediately made preparations for the ceremony. Hymn-books were introduced, and the servant-maid ordered up, and then a quartet was performed by Mr Levisohn, Mrs Tomkins, her husband, and Betsy. The subject of the song was the courtship of Isaac. Two verses only have remained in my memory, and the manner in which they were given out by the fervent Stanislaus will never be forgotten. They ran thus:—

" Ven Abraham's servant to procure  
A vife for Isaae vent,  
He met Rebekah, tould his vish,  
Her parents gave conshent.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
' Shtay,' Satan, my old master, cries,  
' Or force shall thee detain.'  
Hinder me not, I vill be gone,  
I wish to break my chain.' "

This being concluded, Mr Tomkins asked Mr Levisohn what he had to say in the business line, to which Mr Levisohn replied, " Someting very goot, but should he not vait until after soppare ? " whereupon Mr Tomkins gave his lady a significant leer,

and the latter retired, evidently to prepare the much desired repast. Then did little Jehu turn confidentially to Stanislaus, and ask him when he meant to deliver that 'ere *conac* that he had promised him so long ago.

“ Ven Providence, my tear dikkon, paremits—I expect a case of goots at de cushtom-house every day; but my friend vot examines de marchandis, and vot saves me de duties ven I makes it all right mit him, is vary ill, I am sorry for to say, and ve most vait mit Christian patience, my dear sare, till he get well. You see dat?”

“ Oh yes! that’s clear enough. Well, Stanny, I only hope that fellow won’t die. I don’t think you’d find it so easy to make it *all right* with any other chap; that’s all!”

“ I hope he vill not die. Ve mosht pray dat he live, my dear dikkon. I tink it vill be vell if der goot Mr Clayton pray mit der church for him. You shall speak for him.”

“ Well, what have you done about the *Eau de Cologne?*” continued Jehu Tomkins. “ Have you nailed the fellow?”

“ It vos specially about dis matter dat I vish to see you, my dear sare. I persvade der man to sell ten cases. He be very nearly vot you call in der mess. He walk into de Gazette next week. He shtarve now. I pity him. De ten cases cost him ten pounds. I give fifty shilling—two pound ten. He buy meat

for de childs, and is tankful. I take ten shillings for my trouble. Der Christian satisfied mit vary little."

"Any good bills in the market, Stanny?"

Stanislaus Levisohn winked.

"Ho—you don't say so," said the deacon. "Have you got 'em with you?"

"After soppare, my dear sare," answered Stanislaus, who looked at me, and winked again significantly at Jehu.

Mrs Tomkins returned, accompanied by the vocal Betsy. The cloth was spread, and real silver forks, and fine cut tumblers, and blue plates with scripture patterns, speedily appeared. Then came a dish of fried sausages and parsley—then baked potatoes—then lamb chops. Then we all sat round the table, and then, against all order and propriety, Mrs Jehu grossly and publicly insulted her husband at his own board, by calling upon the enlightened foreigner to ask a blessing upon the meal.

The company sat down; but scarcely were we seated before Stanislaus resumed.

"I tank you, my tear goot Mrs Tomkins, for dat shop mit der brown, ven it comes to my turn to be sarved. It look just der ting."

Mrs Jehu served her guest immediately.

"I vill take a sossage, tear lady, also, if you please."

"And a baked potato?"

"And a baked potato? Yase."

He was served.

"I beg your pardon, Christian lady, have you got, perhaps, der littel pickel-chestnut and der crimson-cabbage?"

"Mr Tomkins, go down-stairs and get the pickles," said the mistress of the house, and Tomkins vanished like a mouse on tiptoe.

Before he could return, Stanislaus had eaten more than half his chop, and discovered that, after all, "it was *not* just the ting." Mrs Jehu entreated him to try another. He declined at first; but at length suffered himself to be persuaded. Four chops had graced the dish originally; the remaining two were divided equally between the lady and myself. I begged that my share might be left for the worthy host; but receiving a recommendation from his wife "not to mind *him*," I said no more, but kept Mr Stanislaus Levisohn in countenance.

"I hope you'll find it to your liking, Mr Stukely," said our hostess.

"Mishter vat?" exclaimed the foreigner, looking quickly up. "I tink I"—

"What is the matter, my dear sir?" enquired the lady of the house.

"Noting, my tear friend, I tought der young gentleman vos a poor unconverted sinner dat I met a long time ago. Dat is all. Ve talk of someting else."

Has the reader forgotten the dark-visaged individual,

who, at the examination of my lamented father before the commissioners of bankruptcy, made his appearance in company with Mr Levy and the ready Ikey? Him I mean of the vivid imagination, who swore to facts which were no facts at all, and whom an unpoetic jury sentenced to vile imprisonment for wilful perjury? *There he sat*, transformed into a Pole, bearded and whiskered, and the hair of his head close clipped, but in every other regard the same as when the constable invited him to forsake a too prosaic and ungrateful world; and had Mr Levisohn been wise and guarded, the discovery would never have been made by me; for we had met but once before, then only for a short half hour, and under agitating circumstances. But my curiosity and attention once roused by his exclamation, it was impossible to mistake my man. I fixed my eye upon him, and the harder he pulled at his chop, and the more he attempted to evade my gaze, the more satisfied was I that a villain and an impostor was seated amongst us. Thinking, absurdly enough, to do my host and hostess a lasting service, I determined without delay to unmask the pretended saint, and to secure his victims from the designs he purposed.

“Mr Levisohn,” I said immediately, “you have told the truth—we have met before.”

“Nevare, my tear friend, you mistake; nevare in my life, upon my vurd!”

“Mrs Tomkins,” I continued, rising, “I should not be worthy of your hospitality if I did not at once

make known to you the character of that man. He is a convicted criminal. I myself know him to be guilty of the grossest practices.” Mr Levisohn dropped his chop, turned his greasy face up, and then looked round the room, and endeavoured to appear unconcerned, innocent, and amazed all at once. At this moment Jehu entered the room with the pickles, and the face of the deaconess grew fearfully stern.

“ Were you ever in the Court of Bankruptcy, Mr Levisohn ?” I continued.

“ I have never been out of London, my good sare. You labour under de mistake.—I excuse you. Ah !” he cried out suddenly, as if a new idea had struck him very hard ; “ I see now vot it is. I explain. You take me for somebody else.”

“ I do not, sir. I accuse you publicly of having committed perjury of the most shameless kind, and I can prove you guilty of the charge. Do you know a person of the name of Levy ?”

Mr Stanislaus looked to the ceiling after the manner of individuals who desire, or who do not desire, as the case may be, to call a subject to remembrance. “ No,” he answered, after a long pause ; “ certainly not. I never hear dat name.”

“ Beware of him, Mrs Tomkins,” I continued ; “ he is an impostor, a disgrace to mankind, and to the faith which he professes.”

“ What do you mean by that, you impudent young man ?” said Mrs Tomkins, her blood rising to

her face, herself rising from her chair. "I should have thought that a man who had been so recently expelled from his church would have had more decency. A pretty person you must be, to bring a charge of this kind against so good a creature as that."

"No, do not say dat," interposed Stanny; "I am not goot. I am a brute beast."

"Mr Tomkins," continued the lady, "I don't know what object that person has in disturbing the peace of our family, or why he comes here at all to-night. He is a mischief-making, hardened young man, or he would never have come to what he has. Well, I'm sure—What will Satan put into his head next?"

"I vould vish you be not angry. Der young gentleman is, I dare say, vary goot at heart. He is labouring under de deloosions."

"Mr Levisohn, pardon me, I am not. Proofs exist, and I can bring them to convict you."

"Do you hear that, Mr Tomkins? Were you ever insulted so before? Are you master in your own house?"

"What shall I do?" said Jehu, trembling with excitement at the door.

"Do! What! Give him his hat, turn him out."

"Oh, my dear goot Christian friends!" said Mr Levisohn, imploringly; de booels of der Christian growls ven he shees dese sights; vot is de good of to fight? It is shtoopid. Let me be der peacemaker.

Der yong man has been drink, perhaps. I forgive him from de bottom of my heart. If ve quarrel ve fight. If ve fight ve lose every ting.

‘ So Samson, ven his hair vos lost,  
Met the Philistines to his cost,  
Shook his vain limbs in shad shurprise,  
Made feeble fight, and lost his eyes.’ ”

“ Mr Tomkins !” I exclaimed, “ I court enquiry, I can obtain proofs.”

“ We want none of your proofs, you backslider,” cried the deaconess.

“ Madam, you”—

“ Get out of the house, ambassador of Satan ! Mr Tomkins, will you tell him instantly to go ?”

“ Go !” squealed Tomkins from the door, not advancing an inch.

I seized my hat, and left the table.

“ You will be sorry for this, sir,” said I; “ and you, madam”—

“ Don’t talk to me, you bad man. If you don’t go this minute, I’ll spring the rattle and have up the watchmen.”

I did not attempt to say another word. I left the room, and hurried from the house. I had hardly shut the street door before it was violently opened again, and the head of Mr Levisohn made itself apparent.

“ Go home,” exclaimed that gentleman, “ and pray to be shaved, you shtoopid ass !”

It was not many days after the enacting of this

scene, that I entered upon my duties as the instructor of the infant children of my friend. It was useless to renew my application to the deacon, and I abandoned the idea. The youngest of my pupils was the lisping Billy. It was my honour to introduce him at the very porch of knowledge—to place him on the first step of learning's ladder—to make familiar to him the simple letters of his native tongue, in whose mysterious combinations the mighty souls of men appear and speak. The lesson of the alphabet was the first that I gave, and a heavy sadness depressed and humbled me, when as the child repeated, wonderingly after me, letter by letter, I could not but feel deeply and acutely the miserable blighting of my youthful promises. How long was it ago—it seemed but yesterday—when the sun used to shine brightly into my own dear bedroom and awake me with its first gush of light, telling my ready fancy that he came to rouse me from inaction, and to encourage me to my labours ! Oh, happy labours ! Beloved books ! What joy I had amongst you ! The house was silent—the city's streets tranquil as the breath of morning. I heard nothing but the glorious deeds ye spoke of, and saw only the worthies that were but dust, when centuries now passed were yet unborn, but whose immortal spirits are vouchsafed still to elevate man, and cheer him onward. How intense and sweet was our communion ; and as I read and read on, how gratefully repose crept over me ! How difficult it seemed to think unkindly of the world,

or to believe in all the tales of human selfishness and cruelty with which the old will ever mock the ear and dull the heart of the confiding and the young ! How willing I felt to love, and how gay a place was earth, with her constant sun, and overflowing lap, and her thousand joys, for man ! And how intense was the fire of *hope* that burned within me—fed with new fuel every passing hour; and how abiding and how beautiful *the future !* THE FUTURE ! and it was here—a nothing—a dream—a melancholy phantasm !

There are seasons of adversity, in which the mind, plunged in despondency and gloom, is startled and distressed by pictures of a happier time, that travel far to fool and tantalize the suffering heart. I sat with the child, and gazing full upon him, beheld him not, but—a vision of my father's house. There sits the good old man, and at his side—ah, how seldom were they apart!—my mother. And there, too, is the clergyman, my first instructor. Every well-remembered piece of furniture is there. The chair, sacred to my sire, and venerated by me for its age, and for our long intimacy. I have known it since first I knew myself. The antique bookcase—the solid chest of drawers—the solemn sofa, all substantial as ever, and looking, as at first, the immoveable and natural properties of the domestic parlour. My mother has her eyes upon me, and they are full of tears. My father and the minister are building up my fortunes, are fixing in the sandy basis of futurity

an edifice formed of glittering words, incorporeal as the breath that rears it. And the feelings of that hour come back upon me. I glow with animation, confidence, and love. I have the strong delight that beats within the bosom of the boy who has the parents' trusty smile for ever on him. I dream of pouring happiness into those fond hearts—of growing up to be their prop and staff in their decline. I pierce into the future, and behold myself the esteemed and honoured amongst men—the patient, well-rewarded scholar—the cherished and the cherisher of the dear authors of my life—all brightness—all glory—all unsullied joy. The child touches my wet cheek, and asks me why I weep?—why? why? He knows not of the early wreck that has annihilated the unhappy teacher's peace.

We were still engaged upon our lesson, when John Thompson interrupted the proceeding, by entering the apartment in great haste, and placing in my hands a newspaper. "He had been searching," he said, "for one whole fortnight, to find a situation that would suit me, and now he thought that he had hit upon it. There it was, 'a tutorer in a human family,' to teach the languages and the sciences. Apply from two to four. It's just three now. Send the youngster to his mother, and see after it, my friend. I wouldn't have you lose it for the world." I took the journal from his hands, and, as though placed there by the hand of the avenger to arouse deeper remorse, to draw still hotter blood from the lacerated heart, the follow-

ing announcement, and nothing else, glared on the paper, and took possession of my sight:—

“UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.—After a contest more severe than any known for years, MR JOHN SMITHSON, *of Trinity College, Cambridge*, has been declared THE SENIOR WRANGLER of his year. Mr Smithson is, we understand, the son of an humble curate in Norfolk, whose principal support has been derived from the exertions of his son during his residence in the University. The honour could not have been conferred on a more deserving child of Alma Mater.”

A hundred recollections crowded on my brain. My heart was torn with anguish. The perseverance and the filial piety of Smithson, so opposite to my unsteadiness and unnatural disloyalty, confounded and unmanned me. I burst into tears before the faithful Thompson, and covered my face for very shame.

“What is the matter, lad?” exclaimed the good fellow, pale with surprise, his eye trembling with honest feeling. “Have I hurt you? Drat the paper! Don’t think, Stukely, I wished to get rid of you. Don’t think so hard of your old friend. I thought to help and do you service; I know you have the feelings of a gentleman about you, and I wouldn’t wound ‘em, God knows, for any thing. There, think no more about it. I am so rough a hand, I’m not fit to live with Christians. I mean no harm, believe me. Get rid of you, my boy! I only wish you’d say this is your

home, and never leave me—that would make me happy."

"Thompson," I answered, through my tears, "I am not deserving of your friendship. You have not offended me. You have never wronged me. You are all kindness and truth. I have had no real enemy but myself. Read that paper."

I pointed to the paragraph, and he read it.

"What of it?" he asked.

"Thompson, listen to me; what do you say of such a son?"

"I can guess his father's feelings," said my friend. "Earth's a heaven, Stukely, when father and child live together as God appointed them."

"But when a child breaks a parent's heart, Thompson—what then?"

"Don't talk about it, lad. I have got eleven of 'em, and that's a side of the pictur that I can't look at with pleasure. I think the boys are good. They have gone on well as yet; but who can tell what a few years will do?"

"Or a few months, Thompson," I answered quickly; "or a few days, or hours, when the will is fickle, principles unfixed, and the heart treacherous and false. That Smithson and I, Thompson, were fellow-students. We left home together—we took up our abode in the University together—we were attacned to the same college—taught by the same master—read from the same books. My feelings were as warm as his.

My resolution to do well apparently as firm, my knowledge and attainments as extensive. If he was encouraged, and protected, and urged forward by the fond love of a devoted household—so was I. If parental blessings hallowed his entrance upon those pursuits which have ended so successfully for him—so did they mine. If he had motive for exertion, I had not less—we were equal in the race which we began together—look at us now!"

"How did it happen, then?"

"He was honest and faithful to his purpose. I was not. He saw one object far in the distance before him, and looked neither to the right nor left, but dug his arduous way towards it. He craved not the false excitement of temporary applause, nor deemed the opinion of weak men essential to his design. He had a sacred duty to perform, which left him not the choice of action, and he performed it to the letter. He had a feeling conscience and a reasoning heart; and the home of his youth, and the sister who had grown up with him, the father who had laboured, the mother who had striven for him, visited him by night and by day—in his silent study, and in his lonely bed, comforting, animating, and supporting him by their delightful presence."

"And what did you do?"

"Just the reverse of this. I had neither simplicity of aim, nor stability of affection. One slip from the path, and I hadn't energy to take the road again. One

vicious inclination, and the virtuous resolves of years melted before it. The sneer of a fool could frighten me from rectitude—the smile of a girl render me indifferent to the pangs that tear a parent's heart. Look at us both. Look at him—the man whom I treated with contemptuous derision. What a return home for him—his mission accomplished—**HIS DUTY DONE!** Look at me, the outcast, the beggar, the despised—the author of a mother's death, a father's bankruptcy and ruin—with no excuse for misconduct, no promise for the future, no self-justification, and no hope of pardon beyond that afforded to the vilest criminal that comes repentant to the mercy-throne of God!"

"Well—but, sir—Stukely—don't take the thing to heart. You are young—look for'ards. Oh! I tell you, it's a blessed thing to be sorry for our faults, and to feel as if we wished to do better for the time to come. I'm an older man than you, and I bid you take comfort, and trust to God for better things, and better things will come, too. You are not so badly off now as you were this time twelvemonth. And you know I'll never leave you. Don't despond—don't give away. It's unnatural for a man to do it, and he's lost if he does. Oh! bless you, this is a life of suffering and sorrow, and well it is; for who wouldn't go mad to think of leaving all his young uns behind him, and every thing he loves, if he wasn't taught that there's a quieter place above, where all shall meet agin? You know me, my

boy ; I can't talk, but I want to comfort you and cheer you up—and so, give me your hand, old fellow, and say you won't think of all this any more, but try and forget it, and see about settling comfortably in life. What do you say to the advertisement ? A tutorer in a human family, to teach the languages and the sciences. Come now, that's right ; I'm glad to see you laugh. I suppose I don't give the right pronunciation to the words. Well, never mind ; laugh at your old friend. He'd rather see you laugh at him, than tease your heart about your troubles."

Thompson would not be satisfied until I had read the advertisement, and given him my opinion of its merits. He would not suffer me to say another word about my past misfortunes, but insisted on my looking forward cheerfully, and like a man. The situation appeared to him just the thing for me ; and after all, if I had wrangled as well as that 'ere Smithson—(though, at the same time, *wrangling* seemed a very aggravating word to put into young men's mouths at all)—perhaps I shouldn't have been half as happy as a quiet comfortable life would make me. "I was cut out for a tutorer. He was sure of it. So he'd thank me to read the paper without another syllable." The advertisement, in truth, was promising. "The advertiser, in London, desired to engage the services of a young gentleman, capable of teaching the ancient languages, and of giving his pupils 'an introduction to the sciences.' The salary would be liberal, and the

occupation with a humane family in the country, who would receive the tutor as one of themselves. References would be required and given."

"References would be required and given," I repeated, after having concluded the advertisement, and put the paper down.

"Yes, that's the only thing!" said Thompson, scratching his honest ear, like a man perplexed and driven to a corner. "We haven't got no references to give. But I'll tell you what we've got, though. We've got the papers of these freehold premises, and we've something like two thousand in the bank. I'll give 'em them, if you turns out a bad un. That I'll undertake to do, and sha'n't be frightened either. Now, you just go, and see if you can get it. Where do you apply?"

"Wait, Thompson. I must not suffer you"—

"Did you hear what I said, sir? where do you apply?"

"At X Y Z," said I, "in Swallow street, Saint James's."

"Then, don't you lose a minute. I shouldn't be surprised if the place is run down already. London's overstocked with tutorers and men of larning. You come along o' me, Billy, and don't you lose sight of this 'ere chance, my boy. If they wants a reference, tell 'em I'll be glad to wait upon 'em."

Three days had not elapsed after this conversation, before my services were accepted by X Y Z—and I

had engaged to travel into Devonshire to enter at once upon my duties, as teacher in the dwelling-house of the Reverend Walter Fairman. X Y Z was a man of business; and, fortunately for me, had known my father well. He was satisfied with my connexion, and with the unbounded recommendation which Thompson gave with me. Mr Fairman was incumbent of one of the loveliest parishes in England, and the guardian and teacher of six boys. My salary was fifty pounds per annum, with board and lodging. The matter was settled in a few hours, and before I had time to consider, my place was taken in the coach, and a letter was dispatched to Mr Fairman, announcing my intended departure. Nothing could exceed the joy of Thompson at my success—nothing could be kinder and more anxious than his valuable advice.

“Now,” he said, as we walked together from the coach-office, “was I wrong in telling you that better things would turn up? Take care of yourself, and the best wrangler of the lot may be glad to change places with you. It isn’t lots of larning, or lots of money, or lots of houses and coaches, that makes a man happy in this world. They never can do it; but they do just the contrarery, and make him the miserablest wretch as crawls. *A contented mind* is ‘the one thing needful.’ Take what God gives gratefully, and do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. That’s a maxim my poor father was always giving me, and I wish, when I take the young uns

to church, that they could always hear it, for human natur needs it."

The evening before my setting out was spent with Thompson's family. I had received a special invitation, and Thompson, with the labouring sons, were under an engagement to the mistress of the house, to leave the workshop at least an hour earlier than usual. Oh ! it was a sight to move the heart of one more hardened than I can boast to be, to behold the affectionate party assembled to bid me farewell, and to do honour to our leave-taking. A little feast was prepared for the occasion, and my many friends were dressed, all in their Sunday clothes, befittingly. There was not one who had not something to give me for a token. Mary had worked me a purse ; and Mary blushed whilst her mother betrayed her, and gave the little keepsake. Ellen thought a pincushion might be useful ; and the knitter of the large establishment provided me with comforters. All the little fellows, down to Billy himself, had a separate gift, which each must offer with a kiss, and with a word or two expressive of his good wishes. All hoped I would come soon again, and Alec more than hinted a request that I would postpone my departure to some indefinite period which he could not name. Poor tremulous heart ! how it throbbed amongst them all, and how sad it felt to part from them ! Love bound me to the happy room—the only love that connected the poor outcast with the wide cold world. This was the home

of my affections—could I leave it—could I venture once more upon the boisterous waters of life without regret and apprehension ?

Thompson kindly offered to accompany me on the following morning to the inn from which I was destined to depart, but I would not hear of it. He was full of business ; had little time to spare, and none to throw away upon me. I begged him not to think of it, and he acquiesced in my wishes. We were sitting together, and his wife and children had an hour or two previously retired to rest.

“ Them’s good children, ain’t they, Stukely ? ” enquired Thompson, after having made a long pause.

“ You may well be proud of them,” I answered.

“ It looked nice of ’em to make you a little present of something before you went. But it was quite right. That’s just as it should be. I like that sort of thing, especially when a man understands the sperrit that a thing’s given with. Now, some fellows would have been offended if any thing had been offered ’em. How I do hate all that ! ”

“ I assure you, Thompson, I feel deeply their kind treatment of their friend. I shall never forget it.”

“ You ain’t offended, then ? ”

“ No, indeed.”

“ Well, now I am so happy to hear it, you can’t think,” continued Thompson, fumbling about his breeches pocket, and drawing from it at length something which he concealed in his fist. “ There, take

that," he suddenly exclaimed ; " take it, my old fellow, and God bless you ! It's no good trying to make a fuss about it."

I held a purse of money in my hand.

" No, Thompson," I replied, " I cannot accept it. Do not think me proud or ungrateful ; but I have no right to take it."

" It's only twenty guineas, man, and I can afford it. Now look, Stukely, you are going to leave me. If you don't take it, you'll make me as wretched as the day is long. You are my friend, and my friend mustn't go among strangers without an independent spirit. If you have twenty guineas in your pocket, you needn't be worrying yourself about little things. You'll find plenty of ways to make the money useful. You shall pay me, if you like, when you grow rich, and we meets again ; but take it now, and make John Thompson happy."

## PART XIII.

## THE PARSONAGE.

"She was a phantom of delight  
When first she gleam'd upon my sight.  
A lovely apparition sent  
To be a moment's ornament."

WORDSWORTH.

In the lap of nature the troubled mind gets rest ; and the wounds of the heart heal rapidly. Once delivered there, safe from contact with the infectious world, and the bosom of the nursing-mother is not more powerful or quick to lull the pain and still the sobs of her distressed ones. It is the sanctuary of the bruised spirit, and to arrive at it is to secure shelter and to find repose. Peace, eternal and blessed, birth-right and joy of angels, whither do those glimpses hover that we catch of thee in this tumultuous life, weak, faint, and transient though they be, melting the human soul with heavenly tranquillity ? Whither, if not upon the everlasting hills, where the brown line divides the sky, or on the gentle sea, where sea and sky are one—a liquid cupola—or in the leafy woods

and secret vales, where beauty lends her thrilling voice to silence? How often will the remembrance only of one bright spot—a vision of Paradise rising over the dull waste of my existence—send a glow of comfort to my aged heart, and a fresh feeling of repose which the harsh business of life cannot extinguish or disturb! And what a fair history comes with that shadowy recollection! How much of passionate condensed existence is involved in it, and how mysteriously, yet naturally connected with it, seem all the noblest feelings of my imperfect nature! The scene of beauty has become “a joy for ever.”

I recall a spring day—a sparkling day of the season of youth and promise—and a nook of earth, fit for the wild unshackled sun to skip along and brighten with his inconstant, giddy light. Hope is every where; murmuring in the brooks, and smiling in the sky. Upon the bursting trees she sits; she nestles in the hedges. She fills the throat of mating birds, and bears the soaring lark nearer and nearer to the gate of heaven. It is the first holiday of the year, and the universal heart is glad. Grief and apprehension cannot dwell in the human breast on such a day; and, for an hour, even *Self* is merged in the general joy. I reach my destination; and the regrets for the past, and the fear for the future, which have accompanied me through the long and anxious journey, fall from the oppressed spirit, and leave it buoyant, cheerful, free—free to delight itself in a land of enchantment, and

to revel again in the unsubstantial glories of a youthful dream. I paint the Future in the colours that surround me, and I confide in her again.

It was noon when we reached the headquarters of the straggling parish of Deerhurst—its chief village. We had travelled since the golden sunrise over noble earth, and amongst scenes scarcely less heavenly than the blue vault which smiled upon them. Now the horizon was bounded by a range of lofty hills linked to each other by gentle undulations, and bearing to their summits innumerable and giant trees; these, crowded together, and swayed by the brisk wind, presented to the eye the figure of a vast and supernatural sea, and made the intervening vale of loveliness a neglected blank. Then we emerged suddenly—yes, instantaneously—as though designing nature, with purpose to surprise, had hid behind the jutting crag, beneath the rugged steep—upon a world of beauty; garden upon garden, sward upon sward, hamlet upon hamlet, far as the sight could reach, and purple shades of all beyond. Then, flashes of the broad ocean, like quick transitory bursts of light, started at intervals, washing the feet of a tall emerald cliff, or, like a lake, buried between the hills. Shorter and shorter become the intermissions, larger and larger grows the watery expanse, until, at length, the mighty element rolls unobstructed on, and earth, decked in her verdant leaves, her flowers and gems, is on the shore to greet her.

The entrance to the village is by a swift, precipitous descent. On either side are piled rude stones, placed there by a subtle hand, and with a poet's aim, to touch the fancy, and to soothe the traveller with thoughts of other times—of ruined castles, and of old terrace walks. Already have the stones fulfilled their purpose, and the ivy, the brier, and the saxifrage have found a home amongst them. At the foot of the declivity, standing like a watchful mother, is the church—the small, the unpretending, the venerable and lovely village church. You do not see a house till she is passed. Before a house was built about her, she was an aged church, and her favoured graves were rich in heavenly clay. The churchyard gate; and then at once, the limited and quiet village, nestling in a valley and shut out from the world: beautiful and self-sufficient. Hill upon hill behind, each greener than the last—hill upon hill before, all exclusion, and nothing but her own surpassing loveliness to console and cheer her solitude. And is it not enough? What if she know little of the sea beyond its voice, and nothing of external life—her crystal stream, her myrtle-covered cottages, her garden plots, her variegated flowers and massive foliage, her shady dells and scented lanes are joys enough for her small commonwealth. Thin curling smoke, that rises like a spirit from the hidden bosom of one green hillock, proclaims the single house that has its seat upon the eminence. It is the parsonage—my future home.

With a trembling heart I left the little inn, and took my silent way to the incumbent's house. There was no eye to follow me; the leafy street was tenantless, and seemed made over to the restless sun and dissolute winds to wanton through it as they pleased. As I ascended, the view enlarged—beauty became more beauteous, silence more profound. I reached the parsonage gate, and my heart yearned to tell how much I longed to live and die on this sequestered and most peaceful spot. The dwelling-house was primitive and low; its long and overhanging roof was thatched; its windows small and many. A myrtle, luxuriant as a vine, covered its entire front, and concealed the ancient brick and wood. A raised bank surrounded the green nest, and a gentle slope conducted to a lawn fringed with the earliest flowers of the year. I rang the loud bell, and a neatly dressed servant-girl gave me admittance to the house. In a room of moderate size, furnished by a hand as old at least as the grandsires of the present occupants, and well supplied with books, sat the incumbent. He was a man of fifty years of age or more, tall and gentlemanly in demeanour. His head was partly bald, and what remained of his hair was grey almost to whiteness. He had a noble forehead, a marked brow, and a cold grey eye. His mouth betrayed sorrow, or habitual deep reflection, and the expression of every other feature tended to seriousness. The first impression was unfavourable. A youth who was reading

with the minister when I entered the apartment, was dismissed with a simple inclination of the head, and the Rev. Walter Fairman then pointed to a seat.

" You have had a tedious journey, Mr Stukely," began the incumbent, " and you are fatigued, no doubt."

" What a glorious spot this is, sir!" I exclaimed.

" Yes, it is pretty," answered Mr Fairman, very coldly, as I thought. " Are you hungry, Mr Stukely? We dine early; but pray take refreshment if you need it."

I declined respectfully.

" Do you bring letters from my agent?"

" I have a parcel in my trunk, sir, which will be here immediately. What magnificent trees!" I exclaimed again, my eyes riveted upon a stately cluster, which were about a hundred yards distant.

" Have you been accustomed to tuition?" asked Mr Fairman, taking no notice of my remark.

" I have not, sir, but I am sure that I shall be delighted with the occupation. I have always thought so."

" We must not be too sanguine. Nothing requires more delicate handling than the mind of youth. In no business is experience, great discernment and tact, so much needed as in that of instruction."

" Yes, sir, I am aware of it."

" No doubt," answered Mr Fairman quietly. " How old are you?"

I told my age, and blushed.

" Well, well," said the incumbent, " I have no doubt we shall do. You are a Cambridge man, Mr Graham writes me ?"

" I was only a year, sir, at the university. Circumstances prevented a longer residence. I believe I mentioned the fact to Mr Graham."

" Oh yes ! he told me so. You shall see the boys this afternoon. They are fine-hearted lads, and much may be done with them. There are six. Two of them are pretty well advanced. They read Euripides and Horace. Is Euripides a favourite of yours ?"

" He is tender, plaintive, and passionate," I answered ; " but perhaps I may be pardoned if I venture to prefer the vigour and majesty of the sterner tragedian."

" You mean you like *Æschylus* better. Do you write poetry, Mr Stukely ? Not Latin verses, but English poetry."

" I do not, sir."

" Well, I am glad of that. It struck me that you did. Will you really take no refreshment ? Are you not fatigued ?"

" Not in the least, sir. This lovely prospect, for one who has seen so little of nature as I have, is refreshment enough for the present."

" Ah," said Mr Fairman, sighing faintly, " you will get accustomed to it. There is something in the prospect, but more in your own mind. Some of our

poor fellows would be easily served and satisfied, if we could feed them on the prospect. But if you are not tired you shall see more of it if you will. I have to go down to the village. We have an hour till dinner-time. Will you accompany me ?”

“ With pleasure, sir.”

“ Very well.” Mr Fairman then rang the bell, and the servant-girl came in.

“ Where’s Miss Ellen, Mary ?” asked the incumbent.

“ She has been in the village since breakfast, sir. Mrs Barnes sent word that she was ill, and Miss took her the rice and sago that Dr Mayhew ordered.”

“ Has Warden been this morning ?”

“ No, sir.”

“ Foolish fellow. I’ll call on him. Mary, if Cuthbert the fisherman comes, give him that bottle of port wine ; but tell him not to touch a drop of it himself. It is for his sick child, and it is committing robbery to take it. Let him have the blanket also that was looked out for him.”

“ It’s gone, sir. Miss sent it yesterday.”

“ Very well. There is nothing more. Now, Mr Stukely, we will go.”

I have said already that the first opinion which I formed of the disposition of Mr Fairman was not a flattering one. Before he spoke a word, I felt disappointed and depressed. My impression after our short conversation was worse than the first. The

natural effect of the scene in which I suddenly found myself, had been to prepare my ever too forward spirit for a man of enthusiasm and poetic temperament. Mr Fairman was many degrees removed from warmth. He spoke to me in a sharp tone of voice, and sometimes, I suspected, with the intention of mocking me. His *manner*, when he addressed the servant-girl, was not more pleasing. When I followed him from the room, I regretted the haste with which I had accepted my appointment; but a moment afterwards I entered into fairyland again, and the passing shadow left me grateful to Providence for so much real enjoyment. We descended the hill, and for a time, in silence, Mr Fairman was evidently engaged in deep thought, and I had no wish to disturb him. Every now and then we lighted upon a view of especial beauty, and I was on the point of expressing my unbounded admiration, when one look at my cool and matter-of-fact companion at once annoyed and stopped me.

“Yes,” said Mr Fairman at length, still musing. “It is very difficult—very difficult to manage the poor. I wonder if they are grateful at heart. What do you think, Mr Stukely?”

“I have nothing to say of the poor, sir, but praise.”

Mr Fairman looked hard at me, and smiled unpleasantly.

“It is the scenery, I suppose. That will make you praise every thing for the next day or so. It will not do, though. We must walk on our feet, and be

prosaic in this world. The poor are not as poets paint them, nor is there so much happiness in a hovel as they would lead you to expect. The poets are like you—they have nothing to say but praise. Ah, me ! they draw largely on their imaginations."

" I do not, sir, in this instance," I answered, somewhat nettled. " My most valued friends are in the humblest ranks of life. I am proud to say so. I am not prepared to add, that the most generous of men are the most needy, although it has been my lot to meet with sympathy and succour at the hands of those who were much in want of both themselves."

" I believe you, Mr Stukely," answered the incumbent in a more feeling tone. " I am not fond of theories; yet that's a theory with which I would willingly pass through life; but it will not answer. It is knocked on the head every hour of the day. Perhaps it is our own fault. We do not know how to reach the hearts, and educate the feelings of the ignorant and helpless. Just step in here."

We were standing before a hut at the base of the hill. It was a low dirty-looking place, all roof, with a neglected garden surrounding it. One window was in the cob-wall. It had been fixed there originally, doubtless with the object of affording light to the inmates; but light, not being essential to the comfort or happiness of the present tenants, was in a great measure excluded by a number of small rags which occupied the place of the diamond panes that had

departed many months before. A child, ill-clad, in fragments of clothes, with long and dirty hair, unclean face, and naked feet, cried at the door, and loud talking was heard within. Mr Fairman knocked with his knuckle before he entered, and a gruff voice desired him to "come in." A stout fellow, with a surly countenance and unshaven beard, was sitting over an apology for a fire, and a female of the same age and condition was near him. She bore an unhappy infant in her arms, whose melancholy peakish face, not twelve months old, looked already conscious of prevailing misery. There was no flooring to the room, which contained no one perfect or complete article of furniture, but symptoms of many, from the blanketless bed down to the solitary coverless saucepan. Need I add, that the man who sat there, the degraded father of the house, had his measure of liquor before him, and that the means of purchasing it were never wanting, however impudently charity might be called upon to supply the starving family with bread?

The man did not rise upon our entrance. He changed colour very slightly, and looked more ignorantly surly, or tried to do so.

"Well, Jacob Warden," said the incumbent, "you are determined to brave it out, I see." The fellow did not answer.

"When I told you yesterday that your idleness and bad habits were bringing you to ruin, you answered —*I was a liar.* I then said, that when you were

sorry for having uttered that expression, you might come to the parsonage and tell me so. You have not been yet—I am grieved to say it. What have I ever done to you, Jacob Warden, that you should behave so wickedly? I do not wish you to humble yourself to me, but I should have been glad to see you do your duty. If I did mine, perhaps, I should give you up, and see you no more, for I fear you are a hardened man."

"He hasn't had no work for a month," said the wife, in a tone of upbraiding, as if the minister had been the wilful cause of it.

"And whose fault is that, Mrs Warden? There is work enough for sober and honest men in the parish. Why was your husband turned away from the Squire's?"

"Why, all along of them spoons. They never could prove it agin him, that's one thing—though they tried it hard enough."

"Come, come, Mrs Warden, if you love that man, take the right way to show it. Think of your children."

"Yes; if I didn't—who would, I should like to know? The poor are trodden under foot."

"Not so, Mrs Warden, the poor are taken care of, if they are deserving. God loves the poor, and commands us all to love them. Give me your Bible?" The woman hesitated a minute, and then answered—

"Never mind the Bible, that won't get us bread."

“ Give me your Bible, Mrs Warden.”

“ We haven’t got it. What’s the use of keeping a Bible in the house for children as can’t read, when they are crying for summat to eat?”

“ You have sold it, then?”

“ We got a shilling on it—that’s all.”

“ Have you ever applied to us for food, and has it been denied you?”

“ Well, I don’t know. The servant always looks grumpy at us when we come a-begging, and seems to begrudge us every mouthful. It’s all very well to live on other persons’ leavings. I daresay you don’t give us what you could eat yourselves.”

“ We give the best we can afford, Mrs Warden, and, God knows, with no such feeling as you suppose. How is the child? Is it better?”

“ Yes, no thanks to Doctor Mayhew either.”

“ Did he not call, then?”

“ Call! Yes, but he made me tramp to his house for the physic, and when he passed the cottage the other day, I called after him; but devil a bit would he come back. We might have died first. Of course, he knows he isn’t paid, and what does he care?”

“ It is very wrong of you to talk so. You are well aware that he was hurrying to a case of urgency, and could not be detained. He visited you upon the following day, and told you so.”

“ Oh yes, the following day! What’s that to do with it?”

"Woman!" exclaimed Mr Fairman, solemnly, "my heart bleeds for those poor children. What will become of them with such an example before their eyes? I can say no more to you than I have repeated a hundred times before. I would make you happy in this world if I could; I would save you. You forbid me. I would be your true friend, and you look upon me as an enemy. Heaven, I trust, will melt your heart! What is that child screaming for?"

"What! she hasn't had a blessed thing to-day. We had nothing for her."

Mr Fairman took some biscuits from his pockets, and placed them on the table. "Let the girl come in, and eat," said he. "I shall send you some meat from the village. Warden, I cannot tell you how deeply I feel your wickedness. I did expect you to come to the parsonage and say you were sorry. It would have looked well, and I should have liked it. You put it out of my power to help you. It is most distressing to see you both going headlong to destruction. May you live to repent! I shall see you again this evening, and I will speak to you alone. Come, Mr Stukely, our time is getting short."

The incumbent spoke rapidly, and seemed affected. I looked at him, and could hardly believe him to be the cold and unimpassioned man that I had at first imagined him.

We pursued our way towards the village.

"There, sir," said the minister in a quick tone of

voice, “what is the beautiful prospect, and what are the noble trees, to the heart of that man? What have they to do at all with man’s morality? Had those people never seen a shrub or flower, could they have been more impenetrable, more insolent and suspicious, or steeped in vice much deeper? That man wants only opportunity, a large sphere of action, and the variety of crime and motive that are to be found amongst congregated masses of mankind, to become a monster. His passions and his vices are as wilful and as strong as those of any man born and bred in the sinks of a great city. They have fewer outlets—less capability of mischief—and there is the difference.”

I ventured no remark, and the incumbent, after a short pause, continued in a milder strain.

“I may be, after all, weak and inefficient. Doubtless great delicacy and caution are required. Heavenly truths are not to be administered to these as to the refined and willing. The land must be ploughed, or it is useless to sow the seed. Am I not, perhaps, an unskilful labourer?”

Mr Fairman stopped at the first house in the village—the prettiest of the half dozen myrtle-covered cottages before alluded to. Here he tapped softly, and a gentle foot that seemed to know the visitor hastened to admit him.

“Well, Mary,” said the minister, glancing round the room—a clean and happy-looking room it was—“Where’s Michael?”

"He is gone, sir, as you bade him, to make it up with Cousin Willet. He couldn't rest easy, sir, since you told him that it was no use coming to church so long as he bore malice. He won't be long, sir."

Mr Fairman smiled; and, cold as his grey eye might be, it did not seem so steady now.

"Mary, that is good of him; tell him his minister is pleased. How is work with him?"

"He has enough to do to carry him to the month's end, sir."

"Then, at the month's end, Mary, let him come to the parsonage. I have something for him there. But we can wait till then. Have you seen the itinerary preacher since?"

"It is not his time, sir. He didn't promise to come till Monday week."

"Do neither you nor Michael speak with him, nor listen to his public preachings. I mean, regard him not as one having authority. I speak solemnly, and with a view to your eternal peace. Do not forget."

Every house was visited, and in all opportunity was found for the exercise of the benevolent feelings by which the incumbent was manifestly actuated. He lost no occasion of affording his flock sound instruction and good advice. It could not be doubted for an instant that their real welfare, temporal and everlasting, lay deeply in his heart. I was struck by one distinguishing feature in his mode of dealing with his people; it was so opposed to the doctrine and prac-

tice of Mr Clayton, and of those who were connected with him. With the latter, a certain degree of physical fervour, and a conventional peculiarity of expression, were insisted upon and accepted as evidences of grace and renewed life. With Mr Fairman, neither acquired heat, nor the more easily acquired jargon of a clique, were taken into account. He rather repressed than encouraged their existence; but he was desirous, and even eager, to establish rectitude of conduct and purity of feeling in the disciples around him:—these were to him tangible witnesses of the operation of that celestial Spirit before whose light the mists of simulation and deceit fade unresistingly away. I could not help remarking, however, that in every cottage the same injunction was given in respect of the itinerant; the same solemnity of manner accompanied the command; the same importance was attached to its obedience. There seemed to me, fresh from the hands of Mr Clayton, something of bigotry and uncharitableness in all this. I did not hint at this effect upon my own mind, nor did I enquire into the motives of the minister. I was not pleased; but I said nothing. As if Mr Fairman read my very thoughts, he addressed me on the subject almost before the door of the last cottage was closed upon us."

"*Bigoted* and *narrow-minded*, are the terms, Mr Stukely, by which the extremely liberal would characterize the line of conduct which I am compelled by

duty to pursue. I cannot be frightened by harsh terms. I am the pastor of these people, and must decide and act for them. I am their shepherd, and must be faithful. Poor and ignorant, and unripe in judgment, and easily deceived by the shows and counterfeits of truth as the ignorant are, is it for me to hand them over to perplexity and risk? They are simple believers, and are contented. They worship God, and are at peace. They know their lot, and do not murmur at it. Is it right that they should be disturbed with the religious differences and theological subtleties which have already divided into innumerable sects the universal family of Christians whom God made one? Is it fair or merciful to whisper into their ears the plausible reasons of dissatisfaction, envy, and complaining, to which the uninformed of all classes but too eagerly listen? I have ever found the religious and the political propagandist united in the same individual. The man who proposes to the simple to improve his creed, is ready to point out the way to better his condition. He succeeds in rendering him unhappy in both, and there he leaves him. So would this man, and I would rather die for my people, than tamely give them over to their misery."

A tall, stout, weatherbeaten man, in the coarse dress of a fisherman, descending the hill, intercepted our way. It was the man Cuthbert, already mentioned by Mr Fairman. He touched his southwester to the incumbent.

“ How is the boy, Cuthbert ? ” asked the minister, stopping at the same moment.

“ All but well, sir. Doctor Mayhew don’t mean to come again. It’s all along of them nourishments that Miss Ellen sent us down. The doctor says he must have died without them.”

“ Well, Cuthbert, I trust that we shall find you grateful.”

“ Grateful, sir ! ” exclaimed the man. “ If ever I forget what you have done for that poor child, I hope the breath”— The brawny fisherman could say no more. His eyes filled suddenly with tears, and he held down his head, ashamed of them. He had no cause to be so.

“ Be honest and industrious, Cuthbert ; give that boy a good example. Teach him to love his God, and his neighbour as himself. That will be gratitude enough, and more than pay Miss Ellen.”

“ I’ll try to do it, sir. God bless you ! ”

We said little till we reached the parsonage again ; but before I re-entered its gate, the Reverend Walter Fairman had risen in my esteem, and ceased to be considered a cold and unfeeling man.

We dined ; the party consisting of the incumbent, the six students, and myself. The daughter, the only daughter and child of Mr Fairman, who was himself a widower, had not returned from the cottage to which she had been called in the morning. It was necessary that a female should be in constant attendance upon

the aged invalid; a messenger had been dispatched to the neighbouring village for an experienced nurse; and until her arrival Miss Fairman would permit no one but herself to undertake the duties of the sick chamber. It was on this account that we were deprived of the pleasure of her society; for her accustomed seat was at the head of her father's table. I was pleased with the pupils. They were affable and well-bred. They treated the incumbent with marked respect, and behaved towards their new teacher with the generous kindness and freedom of true young gentlemen. The two eldest boys might be fifteen years of age. The remaining four could not have reached their thirteenth year. In the afternoon I had the scholars to myself. The incumbent retired to his library, and left us to pass our first day in removing the restraint that was the natural accompaniment of our different positions, and in securing our intimacy. I talked of the scenery, and found willing listeners. They understood me better than their master, for they were worshippers themselves. They promised to show me lovelier spots than any I had met with yet; sacred corners, known only to themselves, down by the sea, where the arbute and laurustinus grew like trees, and children of the ocean. Then there were villages near, more beautiful even than their own; one that lay in the lap of a large hill, with the sea creeping round, or rolling at its feet like thunder, sometimes. What lanes, too, Miss Fairman knew of! She would

take me into places worth the looking at; and oh, what drawings she had made from them! Their sisters had bought drawings, and paid very dearly for them too, that were not half so finely done! They would ask her to show me her portfolio, and she would do it directly, for she was the kindest creature living. It was not the worst trait in the disposition of these boys, that, whatever might be the subject of conversation, or from whatever point we might start in our discourse, they found pleasure in making all things bear towards the honour and renown of their young mistress. The scenery was nothing without Miss Fairman and her sketches. The house was dull without her; and the singing in the church, if she were ill and absent, was as different as could be. There were the sweetest birds that could be, heard warbling in the high trees that lined the narrow roads; but at Miss Fairman's window there was a nightingale that beat them all. The day wore on, and I did not see the general favourite. It was dusk when she reached the parsonage, and then she retired immediately to rest, tired from the labours of the day. The friend of the family, Doctor Mayhew, had accompanied Miss Fairman home; he remained with the incumbent, and I continued with my young companions until their bed-time. They departed, leaving me their books, and then I took a survey of the work that was before me. My duties were to commence on the following day, and our first subject was the tragedy of *Hecuba*. How

very grateful did I feel for the sound instruction which I had received in early life from my revered pains-taking tutor, for the solid groundwork that he had established, and for the rational mode of tuition which he had from the first adopted. From the moment that he undertook to cultivate and inform the youthful intellect, this became itself an active instrument in the attainment of knowledge—not, as is so often the case, the mere idle depositary of encumbering *words*. It was little that he required to be gained by rote; for he regarded all acquisitions as useless in which the understanding had not the chiefest share. He was pleased to communicate facts, and anxious to discover, from examination, that the principles which they contained had been accurately seen and understood. Then no labour and perseverance on his part were deemed too great for his pupil, and the business of his life became his first pleasure. In the study of Greek, for which at an early age I evinced great aptitude, I learned the structure of the language and its laws from the keen observations of my master, whose rules were drawn from the classic work before us—rather than from grammars. To this hour I retain the information thus obtained, and at no period of my life have I ever had greater cause for thankfulness, than when, after many months of idleness and neglect, with a view to purchase bread, I opened, not without anxiety, my book again, and found that time had not impaired my knowledge, and that light shone brightly

on the pages, as it did of old. Towards the close of the evening, I was invited to the study of Mr Fairman. Doctor Mayhew was still with him, and I was introduced to the physician as the teacher newly arrived from London. The doctor was a stout good-humoured gentleman, of the middle height, with a cheerful and healthy-looking countenance. He was, in truth, a jovial man, as well as a great snuff-taker. The incumbent offered me a chair, and placed a decanter of wine before me. His own glass of port was untouched, and he looked serious and dejected.

“ Well, sir, how does London look ? ” enquired the doctor ; “ are the folks as mad as they used to be ? What new invention is the rage now ? What bubble is going to burst ? What lord committed forgery last ? Who was the last woman murdered before you started ? ”

I confessed my inability to answer.

“ Well, never mind. There isn’t much lost. I am almost ashamed of old England, that’s the truth on’t. I have given over reading the newspapers, for they are about as full of horrors as Miss What’s-her-name’s tales of the Infernals. What an age this is ! all crime and fanaticism ! Every man and every thing is on the rush. Come, Fairman, take your wine.”

Mr Fairman sat gazing on the fire quietly, and took no notice of the request. “ People’s heads,” continued the medical gentleman, “ seemed turned topsy-turvy. Dear me, how different it was in my

time ! What men are about, I can't think. The very last newspaper I read, had an advertisement that I should as soon have expected to see there when my father was alive, as a ship sailing along this coast keel upwards. You saw it, Fairman. It was just under the Everlasting Life Pill advertisement ; and announced that the Reverend Mr Somebody would preach on the Sunday following at some conventicle, when the public were invited to listen to him—and that the doors would be opened half an hour earlier than usual to prevent squeezing. That's modern religion, and it looks as much like ancient play-acting as two peas. Where will these marching days of improvement bring us to at last ? ”

“ Tell me, Mayhew,” said Mr Fairman, “ does it not surprise you that a girl of her age should be so easily fatigued ? ”

“ My dear friend, that makes the sixth time of asking. Let us hope that it will be the last. I don't know what you mean by ‘ *so easily* ’ fatigued. The poor girl has been in the village all day, fomenting and poulticing old Mrs Barnes, and if it had been any girl but herself, she would have been tired out long before. Make your mind easy. I have sent the naughty puss to bed, and she'll be as fresh as a rose in the morning.”

“ She must keep her exertions within proper bounds,” continued the incumbent. “ I am sure she has not strength enough to carry out her good intentions.

I have watched her narrowly, and cannot be mistaken."

" You do wrong, then, Fairman. Anxious watching creates fear, without the shadow of an excuse for it. When we have any thing like a bad symptom, it is time to get uneasy."

" Yes, but what do you call a bad symptom, doctor?"

" Why, I call your worrying yourself into fidgets, and teasing me into an ill temper, a shocking symptom of bad behaviour. If it continue, you must take a dose. Come, my friend, let me prescribe that glass of good old port. It does credit to the cloth."

" Seriously, Mayhew, have you never noticed the short, hacking cough that sometimes troubles her?"

" Yes; I noticed it last January for the space of one week, when there was not a person within ten miles of you who was not either hacking, as you call it, or blowing his nose from morning till night. The dear child had a cold, and so had you, and I, and every body else."

" And that sudden flush, to?"

" Why, you'll be complaining of the bloom on the peach next! That's health, and nothing else, take my word for it."

" I am, perhaps, morbidly apprehensive; but I cannot forget her poor mother. You attended her, Mayhew, and you know how suddenly that came upon us. Poor Ellen! what should I do without her!"

" Fairman, join me in wishing success to our young

friend here. Mr Stukely, here's your good health; and success and happiness attend you. You'll find little society here; but it is of the right sort, I can tell you. You must make yourself at home." The minister became more cheerful, and an hour passed in pleasant conversation. At ten o'clock, the horse of Doctor Mayhew was brought to the gate, and the gentleman departed in great good-humour. Almost immediately afterwards, the incumbent himself conducted me to my sleeping apartment, and I was not loth to get my rest. I fell asleep with the beautiful village floating before my weary eyes, and the first day of my residence at the parsonage closed peacefully upon me.

It was at the breakfast table on the succeeding morning that I beheld the daughter of the incumbent, the favourite and companion of my pupils, and mistress of the house—a maiden in her twentieth year. She was simply and artlessly attired, gentle and retiring in demeanour, and femininely sweet rather than beautiful in expression. Her figure was slender, her voice soft and musical; her hair light brown, and worn plain across a forehead white as marble. The eyebrows which arched the small, rich, hazel eyes, were delicately drawn, and the slightly aquiline nose might have formed a study for an artist. With the exception, however, of this last-named feature, there was little in the individual lineaments of the face to surprise or rivet the observer. Extreme simplicity, and perfect

innocence—these were stamped upon the countenance, and were its charm. It was a strange feeling that possessed me when I first gazed upon her through the chaste atmosphere that dwelt around her. It was degradation deep and unaffected—a sense of shame and undeservedness. I remembered with self-abhorrence the relation that had existed between the unhappy Emma and myself, and the enormity and disgrace of my offence never looked so great as now, and here—in the bright presence of unconscious purity. She reassured and welcomed me with a natural smile, and pursued her occupation with quiet cheerfulness and unconstraint. I did not wonder that her father loved her, and entertained the thought of losing her with fear; for, young and gentle as she was, she evinced wisdom and age in her deep sense of duty, and in the government of her happy home. Method and order waited on her doings, and sweetness and tranquillity—the ease and dignity of a matron elevating and upholding the maiden's native modesty. And did she not love her sire as ardently? Yes, if her virgin soul spoke faithfully in every movement of her guileless face. Yes, if there be truth in tones that strike the heart to thrill it—in thoughts that write their meaning in the watchful eye—in words that issue straight from the fount of love—in acts that do not bear one shade of selfish purpose. It was not a labour of time to learn that the existence of the child, her peace and happiness, were merged in those of

the fond parent. He was every thing to her, as she to him. She had no brother—he no wife: these natural channels of affection cut away, the stream was strong and deep that flowed into each other's hearts. My first interview with the young lady was necessarily limited. I would gladly have prolonged it. The morning was passed with my pupils, and my mind stole often from the work before me, to dwell upon the face and form of her, whom, as a sister, I could have doated on and cherished. How happy I should have been, I deemed, if I had been so blessed! Useless reflection! and yet pleased was I to dwell upon it, and to welcome its return as often as it recurred. At dinner we met again. To be admitted into her presence seemed the reward for my morning toil—a privilege rather than a right. What labour was too great for the advantage of such moments?—moments indeed they were, and less—flashes of time that were not here before they had disappeared. We exchanged but few words. I was still oppressed with the conviction of my own unworthiness, and wondered if she could read in my burning face the history of shame. How she must avoid and despise me, thought I, when she has discovered all, and how bold and wicked it was to darken the light in which she lived with the guilt that was a part of me! Not the less did I experience this when she spoke to me with kindness and unreserve. The feeling grew in strength. I was conscious of deceit and fraud, and could not shake the knowledge

off. I was taking mean advantage of her confidence, assuming a character to which I had no claim, and listening to the accents of innocence and virtue with the equanimity of one good and spotless as herself. In the afternoon the young students resumed their work. When it was over, we strolled amongst the hills ; and, at the close of a delightful walk, found ourselves in the enchanting village. Here we encountered Miss Fairman and the incumbent, and we returned home in company. In one short hour we reached it. How many hours have passed since *that* was ravished from the hand of Time, and registered in the tenacious memory ! Years have floated by, and silently have dropped into the boundless sea, unheeded, unregretted; and these few minutes—sacred relics—live and linger in the world, in mercy it may be, to lighten up my lonely hearth, or save the whitened head from drooping. The spirit of one golden hour shall hover through a life, and shed glory where he falls. What are the unfruitful, unremembered years that rush along, frightening mortality with their fatal speed—an instant in eternity ! What are the moments loaded with passion, intense and never-dying—years, ages upon earth ! Away with the divisions of time, whilst one short breath—the smallest particle or measure of duration —shall outweigh ages. Breathless and silent is the dewy eve. Trailing a host of glittering clouds behind him, the sun stalks down, and leaves the emerald hills in deeper green. The lambs are skipping on the path

—the shepherd as loth to lead them home as they to go. The labourer has done his work, and whistles his way back. The minister has much of good and wise to say to his young family. They hear the business of the day ; their guardian draws the moral, and bids them think it over. Upon my arm I bear his child, the fairest object of the twilight group. She tells me histories of this charmed spot, and the good old tales that are as old as the grey church beneath us ; she smiles and speaks of joys amongst the hills, ignorant of the tearful eye and throbbing heart beside her, that overflow with new-found bliss, and cannot bear their weight of happiness.

Another day of natural gladness—and then the Sabbath ; this not less cheerful and inspiriting than the preceding. The sun shone fair upon the ancient church, and made its venerable grey stones sparkle and look young again. The dark-green ivy that for many a year had clung there, looked no longer sad and sombre, but gay and lively as the newest of the new-born leaves that smiled on every tree. The inhabitants of the secluded village were already a-foot when we proceeded from the parsonage, and men and women from adjacent villages were on the road to join them. The deep-toned bell pealed solemnly, and sanctified the vale ; for its sound strikes deeply ever on the broad ear of nature. Willows and yew-trees shelter the graves of the departed villagers, and the living wend their way beneath them, subdued to seri-

ousness, it may be, by the breathless voice that dwells in every well-remembered mound. There is not one who does not carry on his brow the thoughts that best become it now. All are well dressed, all look cleanly and contented. The children are with their parents, their natural and best instructors. Whom should they love so well? To whom is honour due if not to them? The village owns no school to disannul the tie of blood, to warp and weaken the affection that holds them well together.

All was quietness and decorum in the house of prayer. Every earnest eye was fixed, not upon Mr Fairman, but on the book from which the people prayed; in which they found their own good thoughts portrayed, their pious wishes told, their sorrow and repentance in clearest form described. Every humble penitent was on his knees. With one voice, loud and heartfelt, came the responses which spoke the people's acquiescence in all the pastor urged and prayed on their behalf. The worship over, Mr Fairman addressed his congregation, selecting his subject from the lesson of the day, and fitting his words to the capacities of those who listened. Let me particularly note, that whilst the incumbent pointed distinctly to the cross as the only ground of a sinner's hope, he insisted upon good works as the necessary and essential accompaniment of his faith. "Do not tell me, my dear friends," he said, at the conclusion of his address— "do not tell me that you believe, if your daily life is

unworthy a believer. I will not trust you. What is your belief, if your heart is busy in contrivances to overreach your neighbour? What is it, if your mind is filled with envy, malice, hatred, and revenge? What if you are given over to disgraceful lusts—to drunkenness and debauchery? What if you are ashamed to speak the truth, and are willing to become a liar? I tell you, and I have warrant for what I say, that your conduct one towards another must be straightforward, honest, generous, kind, and affectionate, or you cannot be in a safe and happy state. You owe it to yourselves to be so; for if you are poor and labouring men, you have an immortal soul within you, and it is your greatest ornament. It is that which gives the meanest of us a dignity that no earthly honours can supply; a dignity that it becomes the first and last of us by every means to cherish and support. Is it not, my friends, degrading, fearful to know that we bear about with us the very image of our God, and that we are acting worse than the very brutes of the field? Do yourselves justice. Be pure—pure in mind and body. Be honest, in word and deed. Be loving to one another. Crush every wish to do evil, or to speak harshly; be brothers, and feel that you are working out the wishes of a benevolent and loving Father, who has created you for love, and smiles upon you when you do his bidding.” There was more to this effect, but nothing need be added to explain the scope and tendency of his discourse. His congregation could

not mistake his meaning ; they could not fail to profit by it, if reason was not proof against the soundest argument. As quietly as, and, if it be possible, more seriously than, they entered the church, did the small band of worshippers, at the close of the service, retire from it. Could it be my fancy, or did the wife in truth cling closer to her husband—the father clasp his little boy more firmly in his hand ? Did neighbour nod to neighbour more eagerly as they parted at the churchyard gate—did every look and movement of the many groups bespeak a spirit touched, a mind reproved ? I may not say so ; for my own heart was melted by the scene, and might mislead my judgment. There was a second service in the afternoon. This concluded, we walked to the sea-beach. In the evening Mr Fairman related a connected history from the Old Testament ; whilst the pupils tracked his progress on their maps, and the narrative became a living thing in their remembrances. Serious conversation then succeeded ; to this a simple prayer, and the day closed, sweetly and calmly, as a day might close in Paradise.

The events of the following month partook of the character of those already glanced at. The minister was unremitting in his attendance upon his parishioners, and no day passed during which something had not been accomplished for their spiritual improvement or worldly comfort. His loving daughter was a hand-maid at his side, ministering with him, and shedding sunshine where she came. The villagers were frugal

and industrious; and seemed, for the most part, sensible of their incumbent's untiring efforts. Improvement appeared even in the cottage of the desperate Warden. Mr Fairman obtained employment for him. For a fortnight he had attended to it, and no complaint had reached the parsonage of misbehaviour. His wife had learned to bear her imagined wrongs in silence, and could even submit to a visit from her best friend without insulting him for the condescension. My own days passed smoothly on. My occupation grew every day more pleasing, and the results of my endeavours as gratifying as I could wish them. My pupils were attached to me, and I beheld them improving gradually and securely under their instruction. Mr Fairman, who, for a week together, had witnessed the course of my tuition, and watched it narrowly, was pleased to express his approbation in the warmest terms. Much of the coldness with which I thought he had at first encountered me disappeared, and his manner grew daily more friendly and confiding. His treatment was most generous. He received me into the bosom of his family as a son, and strove to render his fair habitation my genuine and natural home.

Another month passed by, and the colour and tone of my existence had suffered a momentous change. In the acquirement of a fearful joy, I had lost all joy. In rendering every moment of my life blissful and ecstatic, I had robbed myself of all felicity. A few weeks before, and my state of being had realized a

serenity that defied all causes of perturbation and disquiet. Now it was a sea of agitation and disorder; and a breath, a nothing, had brought the restless waves upon the quiet surface. Through the kindness of Mr Fairman, my evenings had been almost invariably passed in the society of himself and his daughter. The lads were early risers, and retired, on that account, at a very early hour to rest. Upon their dismission, I had been requested to join the company in the drawing-room. This company included sometimes Doctor Mayhew, the neighbouring squire, or a chance visitor, but consisted oftenest only of the incumbent and his daughter. Aware of the friendly motive which suggested the request, I obeyed it with alacrity. On these occasions, Miss Fairman used her pencil, whilst I read aloud; or she would ply her needle, and soothe at intervals her father's ear with strains of music, which he, for many reasons, loved to hear. Once or twice the incumbent had been called away, and his child and I were left together. I had no reason to be silent whilst the good minister was present; yet I found that I could speak more confidently and better when he was absent. We conversed with freedom and unrestraint. I found the maiden's mind well stored—her voice was not more sweet than was her understanding clear and cloudless. Books had been her joy, which, in the season of suffering, had been my consolation. They were a common source of pleasure. She spoke of them with feeling,

and I could understand her. I regarded her with deep, unfeigned respect; but, the evening over, I took my leave, as I had come—in peace. Miss Fairman left the parsonage to pay a two days' visit at a house in the vicinity. Until the evening of the first day I was not sensible of her absence. It was then, and at the customary hour of our reunion, that for the first time I experienced, with alarm, a sense of loneliness and desertion—that I became tremblingly conscious of the secret growth of an affection, that had waited only for the time and circumstance to make its presence and its power known and dreaded. In the daily enjoyment of her society, I had not estimated its influence and value. Once denied it, and I dared not acknowledge to myself how precious it had become, how silently and fatally it had wrought upon my heart. The impropriety and folly of self-indulgence were at once apparent—yes, the vanity and wickedness—and, startled by what looked like guilt, I determined manfully to rise superior to temptation. I took refuge in my books; they lacked their usual interest, were ineffectual in reducing the ruffled mind to order. I rose and paced my room, but I could not escape from agitating thought. I sought the minister in his study, and hoped to bring myself to calm and reason by dwelling seriously on the business of the day—with him, the father of the lady, and *my master*. He was not there. He had left the parsonage with Doctor Mayhew an hour before. I walked into the open air

restless and unhappy, relying on the freshness and repose of night to be subdued and comforted. It was a night to soften anger—to conquer envy—to destroy revenge—beautiful and bright. The hills were bathed in liquid silvery light, and on their heights, and in the vale, on all around, lay passion slumbering. What could I find on such a night, but favour and incitement, support and confirmation, flattery and delusion? Every object ministered to the imagination, and love had given that wings. I trembled as I pursued my road, and fuel found its unobstructed way rapidly to the flame within. Self-absorbed, I wandered on. I did not choose my path. I believe I did not, and I stopped at length—before the house that held her. I gazed upon it with reverence and love. One room was lighted up. Shadows flitted across the curtained window, and my heart throbbed sensibly when, amongst them, I imagined I could trace her form. I was borne down by a conviction of wrong and culpability; but I could not move, or for a moment draw away my look. It was a strange assurance that I felt—but I did feel it, strongly and emphatically—that I should see her palpably before I left the place. I waited for that sight in certain expectation, and it came. A light was carried from the room. Diminished illumination there, and sudden brightness against a previously darkened casement, made this evident. The light ascended—another casement higher than the last was, in its turn,

illumined, and it betrayed her figure. She approached the window, and for an instant—oh, how brief!—looked into the heavenly night. My poor heart sickened with delight, and I strained my eyes long after all was blank and dark again.

Daylight, and the employments of day, if they did not remove, weakened the turbulence of the preceding night. The more I found my passion acquiring mastery, with greater vigour I renewed my work, and with more determination I pursued the objects that were most likely to fight and overcome it. I laboured with the youths for a longer period. I undertook to prepare a composition for the following day, which I knew must take much thought and many hours in working out. I armed myself at all points—but the evening came and found me once more conscious of a void that left me prostrate. Mr Fairman was again absent from home. I could not rest in it, and I too sallied forth, but this time, to the village. I would not deliberately offer violence to my conscience, and I shrunk from a premeditated visit to the distant house. My own acquaintances in the village were not many, or of long standing; but there were some half dozen, especial favourites of the incumbent's daughter. To one of these I bent my steps, with no other purpose than that of baffling time, that hung upon me painfully and heavily at home. For a few minutes I spoke with the aged female of the house on general topics; then a passing observation—in spite of me—escaped

my lips in reference to Miss Ellen. The villager took up the theme, and expatiated widely. There was no end to what she had to say of good and kind for the dear lady. I could have hugged her for her praise. Prudence bade me forsake the dangerous ground, and so I did, to return again with tenfold curiosity and zest. I asked a hundred questions, each one revealing more interest and ardour than the last, and involving me in deeper peril. It was at length accomplished. My companion hesitated suddenly in a discourse, then stopped, and looked me in the face, smiling cunningly. "I tell you what, sir," she exclaimed at last, and loudly, "you are over head and ears in love, and that's the truth on't!"

"Hush, good woman," I replied, blushing to the forehead, and hastening to shut an open door. "Don't speak so loud. You mistake, it is no such thing. I shall be angry if you say so—very angry. What can you mean?"

"Just what I say, sir. Why, do you know how old I am? Seventy-three. I think I ought to tell, and where's the harm of it? Who couldn't love the sweetest lady in the parish—bless her young feeling heart?"

"I tell you—you mistake—you are to blame. I command you not to repeat this to a living soul. If it should come to the incumbent's ears"—

"Trust me for that, sir. I'm no blab. He sha'n't

be wiser for such as me. . But do you mean to tell me, sir, with that red face of your'n, you haven't lost your heart—leave alone your trembling ? ah, well, I hopes you'll both be happy, anyhow ! ”

I endeavoured to remonstrate, but the old woman only laughed and shook her aged head. I left her grieved and apprehensive. My secret thoughts had been discovered. How soon might they be carried to the confiding minister and his unsuspecting daughter ! What would they think of me ! It was a day of anxiety and trouble, that on which Miss Fairman returned to the parsonage. I received my usual invitation ; but I was indisposed, and did not go. I resolved to see her only during meals, and when it was impossible to avoid her. I would not seek her presence. Foolish effort ! It had been better to pass hours in her sight, for previous separation made union more intense, and the passionate enjoyment of a fleeting instant was hoarded up, and became nourishment for the livelong day.

It was a soft rich afternoon in June, and chance made me the companion of Miss Fairman. We were alone : I had encountered her at a distance of about a mile from the parsonage, on the sea-shore, whither I had walked distressed in spirit, and grateful for the privilege of listening in gloomy quietude to the soothing sounds of nature—medicinal ever. The lady was at my side almost before I was aware of her approach.

My heart throbbed whilst she smiled upon me, sweetly as she smiled on all. Her deep hazel eye was moist. Could it be from weeping?

"What has happened, Miss Fairman?" I asked immediately.

"Do I betray my weakness, then?" she answered. "I am sorry for it; for dear papa tells all the villagers that no wise man weeps—and no wise woman either, I suppose. But I cannot help it. We are but a small family in the village, and it makes me very sad to miss the ancient faces one after another, and to see old friends dropping and dropping into the silent grave."

As she spoke the church-bell tolled, and she turned pale, and ceased. I offered her my arm, and we walked on.

"Whom do you mourn, Miss Fairman?" I asked at length.

"A dear good friend—my best and oldest. When poor mamma was dying, she made me over to her care. She was her nurse, and was mine for years. It is very wrong of me to weep for her. She was good and pious, and is blest."

The church-bell tolled again, and my companion shuddered.

"Oh! I cannot listen to that bell," she said. "I wish papa would do away with it. What a withering sound it has! I heard it first when it was tolling for

my dear mother. It fell upon my heart like iron then, and it falls so now."

" I cannot say that I dislike the melancholy chime. Death is sad. Its messenger should not be gay."

" It is the soul that sees and hears. Beauty and music are created quickly if the heart be joyful. So my book says, and it is true. You have had no cause to think that bell a hideous thing."

" Yet I have suffered youth's severest loss. I have lost a mother."

" You speak the truth. Yet, I have a kind father left me—and you"—

" I am an orphan, friendless and deserted. God grant, Miss Fairman, you may be spared my fate for years!"

" Not friendless or deserted either, Mr Stukely," answered the young lady kindly; " papa does not deserve, I am sure, that you should speak so harshly."

" Pardon me, Miss Fairman. I did not mean to say that. He has been most generous to me—kinder than I deserve. But I have borne much, and still must bear. The fatherless and motherless is in the world alone. He needs no greater punishment."

" You must not talk so. Papa will, I am sure, be a father to you, as he is to all who need one. You do not know him, Mr Stukely. His heart is overflowing with tenderness and charity. You cannot judge him by his manner. He has had his share of

sorrow and misfortune ; and death has been at his door oftener than once. Friends have been unfaithful and men have been ungrateful ; but trial and suffering have not hardened him. You have seen him amongst the poor, but you have not seen him as I have ; nor have I beheld him as his Maker has, in the secret workings of his spirit, which is pure and good, believe me. He has received injury like a child, and dealt mercy and love with the liberality of an angel. Trust my father, Mr Stukely.”

The maiden spoke quickly and passionately, and her neck and face crimsoned with animation. I quivered, for her tones communicated fire ; but my line of conduct was marked, and it shone clear in spite of the clouds of emotion which strove to envelope and conceal it—as they did too soon.

“ I would trust him, Miss Fairman, and I do,” I answered with a faltering tongue. “ I appreciate his character, and I revere him. I could have made my home with him. I prayed that I might do so. Heaven seemed to have directed my steps to this blissful spot, and to have pointed out at length a resting-place for my tired feet. I have been most happy here—too happy. I have proved ungrateful, and I know how rashly I have forfeited this and every thing. I cannot live here. This is no home for me. I will go into the world again—cast myself upon it—do any thing. I could be a labourer on the highways, and be contented if I could see that I had done my duty, and

behaved with honour. Believe me, Miss Fairman, I have not deliberately indulged—I have struggled, fought, and battled, till my brain has tottered. I am wretched and forlorn ; but I will leave you—to-morrow —would that I had never come ”—— I could say no more. My full heart spoke its agony in tears.

“ What has occurred ? What afflicts you ? You alarm me, Mr Stukely.”

I had sternly determined to permit no one look to give expression to the feeling which consumed me, to obstruct by force the passage of the remotest hint that should struggle to betray me; but as the maiden looked full and timidly upon me, I felt in defiance of me, and against all opposition, the telltale passion rising from my soul, and creeping to my eye. It would not be held back. In an instant, with one treacherous glance, all was spoken and revealed.

## PART XIV.

## THE FUGITIVE.

“ It was of a strange order, that the doom  
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out ;  
\* \* \* \* \* the one  
To end in madness—both in misery.”

BYRON.

THE tongue has nothing to say when the soul hath spoken all ! What need of words in the passionate and early intercourse of love ! There is no oral language that can satisfy or meet the requisitions of the stricken heart. Speech, the worldling and the false—oftener the dark veil than the bright mirror of man’s thoughts—is banished from the spot consecrated to purity, unselfishness, and truth. The lovely and beloved Ellen learned, before a syllable escaped my lips, the secret which those lips would never have disclosed. Her innocent and conscious cheek acknowledged instantly her quick perception, and with maiden modesty she turned aside—not angrily, but timorous as a bird, upon whose leafy covert the heavy fowler’s

foot had trod too harshly and too suddenly. I thought of nothing then but the pain I had inflicted, and was sensible of no feeling but that of shame and sorrow for my fault. We walked on in silence. Our road brought us to the point in the village at which I had met Miss Fairman and her father, when, for the first time, we became companions in our evening walk. We retraced the path which then we took, and the hallowed spot grew lovelier as we followed it. I could not choose but tell how deeply and indelibly the scene of beauty had become imprinted on my heart.

“To you, Miss Fairman,” I began, “and to others who were born and nurtured in this valley, this is a common sight. To me it is a land of enchantment, and the impression that it brings must affect my future being. I am sure, whatever may be my lot, that I shall be a happier man for what I now behold.”

“It is well,” said my companion, “that you did not make the acquaintance of our hills during the bleak winter, when their charms were hidden in the snow, and they had nothing better to offer their worshipper than rain and sleet, and nipping winds. They would have lost your praise then.”

“Do you think so? Imprisoned as I have been, and kept a stranger to the noblest works of Providence, my enjoyment is excessive, and I dare scarcely trust myself to feel it as I would. I could gaze on yonder sweet hillock, with its wild-flowers and its own blue patch of sky, until I wept.”

"Yes, this is a lovely scene in truth!" exclaimed Miss Fairman pensively.

"Do you remember, Miss Fairman, our first spring walk? For an hour we went on, and that little green clump, as it appears from here, was not for a moment out of my sight. My eyes were riveted upon it, and I watched the clouds shifting across it, changing its hue, now darkening, now lighting it up, until it became fixed in my remembrance, never to depart from it. We have many fair visions around us, but that is to me the fairest. It is connected with our evening walk. Neither can be forgotten whilst I live."

It was well that we reached the parsonage gate before another word was spoken. In spite of the firmest of resolutions, the smallest self-indulgence brought me to the very verge of transgression.

In the evening I sat alone, and began a letter to the minister. I wrote a few lines expressive of my gratitude and deep sense of obligation. They did not read well, and I destroyed them. I recommenced. I reproached myself for presumption and temerity, and confessed that I had taken advantage of his confidence by attempting to gain the affections of his only child. I regretted the fault, and desired to be dismissed. The terms which I employed, on reperusal, looked too harsh, and did not certainly do justice to the motives by which throughout I had been actuated; for, however violent had been my passion, *principle* had still protected and restrained me. I had not coldly and

*deliberately* betrayed myself. The second writing, not more satisfactory than the first, was, in its turn, expunged. I attempted a third epistle, and failed. Then I put down the pen and considered. I pondered until I concluded that I had ever been too hasty and too violent. Miss Fairman would certainly take no notice of what had happened; and if I were guarded—silent—and determined for the future, all would still be well. It was madness to indulge a passion which could only lead to my expulsion from the parsonage, and end in misery. Had I found it so easy to obtain a home and quiet, that both were to be so recklessly and shamefully abandoned? Surely it was time to dwell soberly and seriously upon the affairs of life. I had numbered years and undergone trial sufficient to be acquainted with true policy and the line of duty. Both bade me instantly reject the new solicitation, and pursue, with singleness of purpose, the occupation which fortune had mercifully vouchsafed to me. All this was specious and most just, and sounded well to the understanding, that was not less able to look temperately and calmly upon the argument in consequence of the previous overflow of feeling. Reason is never so plausible and prevailing as when it takes the place of gratified passion. Never are we so firmly resolved upon good, as in the moment that follows instantly the doing of evil. Never is conscience louder in her complaints, than when she rises from a temporary overthrow. I had discovered every thing to

Miss Fairman. I had fatally committed myself. There was no doubt of this ; and nothing was left for present consolation but sapient resolutions for the future. Virtuous and fixed they looked in my silent chamber, and in the silent hour of night. Morning had yet to dawn, and they had yet to contend with the thousand incitements which our desires are ever setting up to battle with our better judgment. I did not write to Mr Fairman, but I rose from my seat much comforted, and softened my midnight pillow with the best intentions.

Fancy might have suggested to me, on the following morning, that the eyes of Miss Fairman had been visited but little by sleep, and that her face was far more pallid than usual, if her parent had not remarked, with much anxiety, when she took her place amongst us, that she was looking most weary and unwell. Like the sudden emanation that crimsons all the east, the beautiful and earliest blush of morning, came the driven blood into the maiden's cheek, telling of discovery and shame. Nothing she said in answer, but diligently pursued her occupation. I could perceive that the fair hand trembled, and that the gentle bosom was disquieted. I could tell why downwards bent the head, and with what new emotions the artless spirit had become acquainted. Instantly I saw the mischief which my rashness had occasioned, and felt how deeply had fallen the first accents of love into the poor heart of the secluded one. What had I done by the

short, indistinct, most inconsiderate avowal, and how was it possible now to avert its consequences ? Every tender and uneasy glance that Mr Fairman cast upon his cherished daughter, passed like a sting to me, and roused the bitterest self-reproach. I could have calmed his groundless fears, had I been bold enough to risk his righteous indignation. The frankness and cordiality which had ever marked my intercourse with Miss Fairman, were from this hour suspended. Could it be otherwise with one so innocent, so truthful, and so meek ! Anger she had none, but apprehension and conceptions strange, such as disturbed the awakened soul of woman, ere the storm of passion comes to overcharge it.

I slunk from the apartment and the first meal of the day, like a man guilty of a heinous fault. I pleaded illness, and did not rejoin my friends. I knew not what to do, and I passed a day in long and feverish doubt. Evening arrived. My pupils were dismissed, and once more I sat in my own silent room, lost in anxious meditation. Suddenly an unusual knock at the door roused me, and brought me to my feet. I requested the visitor to enter, and Mr Fairman himself walked slowly in. He was pale and care-worn, and he looked, as I imagined, sternly upon me. "All is known !" was my first thought, and my throat swelled with agitation. I presented a chair to the incumbent ; and when he sat down and turned his wan face upon me, I felt that my own cheek was

no less blanched than his. I awaited his rebuke in breathless suspense.

“ You are indeed ill, Stukely,” commenced Mr Fairman, gazing earnestly. “ I was not aware of this, or I would have seen you before. You have over-worked yourself with the boys. You shall be relieved to-morrow. I will take charge of them myself. You should not have persevered when you found your strength unequal to the task. A little repose will, I trust, restore you.”

With every animating syllable, the affrighted blood returned again, and I gained confidence. His tones assured me that he was still in ignorance. A load was taken from me.

“ I shall be better in the morning, sir,” I answered. “ Do not think seriously of the slightest indisposition. I am better now.”

“ I am rejoiced to hear it,” answered the incumbent. “ I am full of alarm and wretchedness to-day. Did you observe my daughter this morning, Stukely ?”

“ Yes, sir,” I faltered.

“ You did, at breakfast, but you have not seen her since. I wish you had. I am sick at heart.”

“ Is she unwell, sir ?”

“ Do you know what consumption is ? Have you ever watched its fearful progress ?”

“ Never.”

“ I thought you might have done so. It is a fearful disease, and leaves hardly a family untouched.

Did she not look ill?—you can tell me that at least.”

“ Not quite so well, perhaps, as I have seen her, sir; but I should hope”—

“ Eh—what! not very ill, then? Well, that is strange, for I was frightened by her. What can it be? I wish that Mayhew had called in. Every ailment fills me with terror. I always think of her dear mother. Three months before her death, she sat with me, as we do here together, well and strong, and thanking Providence for health and strength. She withered, as it might be, from that hour, and, as I tell you, three short months of havoc brought her to the grave.”

“ Was she young, sir?”

“ A few years older than my child—but that is nothing. Did you say you did not think her looks this morning indicated any symptoms? Oh—no! I recollect. You never saw the malady at work. Well, certainly she does not cough as her poor mother did. Did it look like languor, think you?”

“ The loss of rest might”—

“ Yes, it might, and perhaps it is nothing worse. I know Mayhew thinks lightly of these temporary shadows; but I do not believe he has ever seen her so thoroughly feeble and depressed as she appears to-day. She is very pale, but I was glad to find her face free from all flush whatever. That is comforting. Let us hope the best. How do the boys advance?

What opinion have you formed of the lad Charlton?"

"He is a dull, good-hearted boy, sir. Willing to learn, with little ability to help him on. Most difficult of treatment. His tears lie near the surface. At times it seems that the simplest terms are beyond his understanding, and then the gentlest reproof opens the flood-gate, and submerges his faculties for the day."

"Be tender and cautious, Stukely, with that child. He is a sapling that will not bear the rough wind. Let him learn what he will—rest assured it is all he can. His eagerness to learn will never fall short of yours to teach. He must be kindly encouraged, not frowned upon in his reverses; for who fights so hard against them, or deplores them more deeply than himself? Poor, weak child, he is his own chastiser."

"I will take care, sir."

"Have you seen this coming on, Stukely?"

"With Charlton, sir?"

"No. Miss Fairman's indisposition. For many weeks she has certainly improved in health. I have remarked it, and I was taken by surprise this morning. I should be easier had Mayhew seen her."

"Let me fetch him in the morning, sir. His presence will relieve you. I will start early—and bring him with me."

"Well, if you are better, but certainly not otherwise. I confess I should be pleased to talk with him.

But do not rise too early. Get your breakfast first. I will take the boys until you come back."

This had been the object of the anxious father's visit. As soon as I had undertaken to meet his wish, he became more tranquil. My mission was to be kept a secret. The reason why a servant had not been employed, was the fear of causing alarm in the beloved patient. Before Mr Fairman left me, I was more than half persuaded that I myself had mistaken the cause of his daughter's suffering; so agreeable is it, even against conviction, to discharge ourselves of blame.

The residence of Dr Mayhew was about four miles distant from our village. It was a fine brick house, as old as the oaks which stood before it, conferring upon a few acres of grass land the right to be regarded as a park. The interior of the house was as substantial as the outside; both were as solid as the good doctor himself. He was a man of independent property, a member of the University of Oxford, and a great stickler for old observances. He received a fee from every man who was able to pay him for his services; and the poor might always receive at his door, at the cost of application only, medical advice and physic, and a few commodities much more acceptable than either. He kept a good establishment, in the most interesting portion of which dwelt three decaying creatures, the youngest fourscore years of age and more. They were an entail from his grandfather,

and had faithfully served that ancestor for many years as coachman, housekeeper, and butler. The father of Dr Mayhew had availed himself of their integrity and experience until Time robbed them of the latter, and rendered the former a useless ornament; and dying, he bequeathed them, with the house and lands, to their present friend and patron. There they sat in their own hall, royal servants every one, hanging to life by one small thread, which when it breaks for one must break for all. They had little interest in the present world, to which the daily visit of the doctor, and that alone, connected them. He never failed to pay it. Unconscious of all else, they never failed to look for it.

The village clock struck eleven as I walked up the avenue that conducted to the house. The day was intensely hot, and at that early hour the fierce fire of the sun had rendered the atmosphere sweltry and oppressive. I knocked many times before I could obtain admittance, and, at last, the door was opened by a ragged urchin about twelve years of age, looking more like the son of a thief or a gipsy than a juvenile member of the decent household.

“ Is Dr Mayhew at home ? ” I asked.

“ Oh, I don’t know ! ” he answered surlily ; “ you had better come and see ; ” and therewith he turned upon his heel, and tramped heavily down the kitchen stairs. For a few seconds I remained where I was. At length, hearing no voices in the house, and finding

that no one was likely to come to me, I followed him. At the bottom of the stairs was a long passage leading to the offices. It was very dark, or it was rendered so to me who had just left the glare of noonday. At the end of it, however, a small lamp glimmered, ~~and~~ under its feeble help I advanced. Arriving at its extremity, I was stopped by the hum of many voices that proceeded from a chamber on the right. Here I knocked immediately. The voice of Dr Mayhew desired me to enter. The door was opened the moment afterwards, and then I beheld the doctor himself and every servant of the house assembled in a crowd. The little boy who had given me admission was in the group; and in the very centre of all, sitting upright in a chair, was the strangest apparition of a man that I have ever gazed upon, before or since. The object that attracted, and at the same time repelled, my notice, was a creature whose age no living man could possibly determine. He was at least six feet high, with raven hair, and a complexion sallow as the sear leaf. Look at his figure, then mark the absence of a single wrinkle, and you judge him for a youth. Observe again: look at the emaciated face; note the jet-black eye, deeply sunken, and void of all fire and life; the crushed, the vacant, and forlorn expression; the aquiline nose, prominent as an eagle's, from which the parchment skin is drawn as rigidly as though it were a dead man's skin, bloodless and inert. The wear and tear, the buffeting and

misery of seventy years are there. Seventy!—yea, twice seventy years of mortal agony and suffering could hardly leave a deeper impress. He is strangely clad. He is in rags. The remnants of fine clothes are dropping from his shrunken body. His hand is white and small. Upon the largest finger he wears a ring—once, no doubt, before his hand had shrivelled up, the property and ornament of the smallest. It is a sparkling diamond, and it glistens as his own black eye should, if it be true that he is old only in mental misery and pain. There is no sign of thought or feeling in his look. His eye falls on no one, but seems to pass beyond the lookers-on, and to rest on space. The company are far more agitated. A few minutes before my arrival the strange object had been found, with the boy whom I had first seen, wandering in the garden. He was apprehended for a thief, brought into the house, and not until Dr Mayhew had been summoned, had it been suspected that the poor creature was an idiot. Commiseration then took the place of anger quickly, and all was anxiety and desire to know whence he had come, who he might be, and what his business was. He could not speak for himself, and the answers of the boy had been unsatisfactory and vague. When I entered the room, the doctor gave me a slight recognition, and proceeded at once to a further examination of the stripling.

“Where did you pick him up, sir?” enquired the doctor.

“ Mother sent me out a-begging with him,” answered the gipsy boy.

“ Who is your mother ? ”

“ Mabel.”

“ Mabel what ? ”

“ Mabel nothing.”

“ Where does she live, then ? ”

“ She doesn’t live nowhere. She’s a trumper.”

“ Where is she now ? ”

“ How can I tell ? We shall pick her up somewhere. Let me go, and take Silly Billy with me. I shall get such a licking if I don’t.”

“ Is his name Billy ? ”

“ No, Silly Billy ; all them chaps as is fools are called Silly Billy. You know that, don’t you ? Oh, I say, do let’s go now—there’s good fellows ! ”

“ Wait a moment, boy—not so fast. How long have you been acquainted with this unfortunate ? ”

“ What, Silly Billy ? Oh, we ain’t very old friends ! I only see’d him yesterday. He came up quite unawares to our camp whilst we were grubbing. He seemed very hungry, so mother gave him summut, and made him up a bed—and she means to have him. So she sent me out this morning a-begging with him, and told me she’d break every gallows bone I’d got, if I did not bring him back safe. I say, now I have told all, let us go—there’s a good gentleman ! I am quite glad he is going to live with us. It’s so lucky to have a Silly Billy.”

"How is it, you young rascal, you didn't tell me all this before? What do you mean by it?"

"Why, it isn't no business of your'n. Let us go, will you?"

"Strange," said Dr Mayhew, turning to his butler—"Strange, that they should leave that ring upon his finger—valuable as it looks."

"Oh, you try it on, that's all! Catch mother leaving that there, if she could get it off. She tried hard enough, I can tell you, and I thought he'd just have bitten her hand off. Wasn't he savage neither, oh cry! She won't try at it again in a hurry. She says it serves her right, for no luck comes of robbing a Silly Billy."

The servants, who betrayed a few minutes before great anxiety and apprehension, were perfectly overcome by this humorous sally, and burst, with one accord, into the loudest laughter. The generally jocose doctor, however, looked particularly serious, and kept his eye upon the poor idiot with an expression of deep pity. "Will he not speak?" he asked, still marking his unhappy countenance, bereft of every sign of sensibility.

"He won't say not nuffin," said the boy, in a tone which he hoped would settle the business. "You have no right to keep us. Let us go."

"Leave me with these persons," said the doctor, turning to the servants. "We will see if the tongue

of this wretched creature be really tied. Go, all of you."

In an instant the room was left to Doctor Mayhew and myself—the idiot and his keeper.

"What is your name, my man?" enquired the physician in a soothing tone. "Do not be frightened. Nobody will hurt you here. We are all your very good friends. Tell me now, what is your name?"

The questioner took the poor fellow at the same time by the hand, and pressed it kindly. The latter then looked round the room with a vacant stare, and sighed profoundly.

"Tell me your name," continued the doctor, encouraged by the movement. The lips of the afflicted man unclosed. His brick-red tongue attempted to moisten them. Fixing his expressionless eyes upon the doctor, he answered, in a hollow voice, "*Belton.*"

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the boy. "Them Silly Billies is the deceitfulest chaps as is. He made out to mother that he couldn't speak a word."

"Take care what you are about, boy," said Doctor Mayhew sternly. "I tell you that I suspect you." Turning to the idiot, he proceeded—"And where do you come from?"

The lips opened again, and the same hollow voice again answered, "*Belton.*"

"Yes, I understand—that is your name—but whither do you wish to go?"

"*Belton*," said the man.

"Strange!" ejaculated the doctor. "How old are you?"

"*Belton*," repeated the simple creature, more earnestly than ever.

"I am puzzled," exclaimed Dr Mayhew, releasing the hand of the idiot, and standing for a few seconds in suspense. "However," he continued, "upon one thing I am resolved. The man shall be left here, and in my care. I will be responsible for his safety until something is done for him. We shall certainly get intelligence. He has escaped from an asylum—I have not the slightest doubt of it—and we shall be able, after a few days, to restore him. As for you, sir," he added, addressing the young gipsy, "make the best of your way to your mother, and be thankful that you have come so well off—fly!"

The boy began to remonstrate, upon which the doctor began to talk of the cage and the horsepond. The former then evinced his good sense by listening to reason, and by selecting, as many a wiser man has done before him—the smaller of two necessary evils. He departed, not expressing himself in the most elegant terms that might have been applied to a leave-taking.

The benevolent physician soon made arrangements for the comfort of his charge. He was immediately placed in a bath, supplied with food, and dressed in decent clothing. He submitted at once to his treat-

ment, and permitted his attendant to do what he would with him, taking, all the while, especial care to feel the diamond ring safe and secure under the palm of his own hand. A room was given to him and Robin, the gardener's son, who was forthwith installed his guardian, with strict directions not to leave the patient for an instant by himself. When Dr Mayhew had seen every thing that could be done properly executed, he turned cheerfully to me, and bade me follow him to his library.

"His clothes have been good," muttered the doctor to himself, as he sat down. "Diamond ring! He is a gentleman, or has been one. Curious business! Well, we shall have him advertised all round the country in a day or two. Meanwhile here he is, and will be safe. That trouble is over. Now, Stukely, what brings you so early? Any thing wrong at home? Fairman in the dumps again; fidgety and restless, eh?"

I told my errand.

"Ah, I thought so! There's nothing the matter there, sir. She is well enough now, and will continue so, if her father doesn't frighten her into sickness, which he may do. I tell you what, I must get little puss a husband, and take her from him. That will save her. I have my eye upon a handsome fellow —Hollo, sir, what's the matter with you! Just look at your face in that glass. It is as red as fire."

“ The weather, sir, is ”—

“ Oh, is it? You mean to say, then, that you are acquainted with the influences of the weather. That is just the thing, for you can help me to a few facts for the little treatise on climate which I have got now in hand. Well, go on, my friend. You were saying that the weather is—is what? ”

“ It is very hot, sir,” I answered, dreadfully annoyed.

“ Well, so it is ; that’s very true, but not original. I have heard the same remark at least six times this morning. I say, Master Stukely, you haven’t been casting sheep’s-eyes in that sweet quarter, have you ? Haven’t, perhaps, been giving the young lady instruction as well as the boys—eh ? ”

“ I do not understand, sir,” I struggled to say with coolness.

“ Oh, very well ! ” answered Dr Mayhew dryly. “ That’s very unfortunate too, for,” continued he, taking out his watch, “ I haven’t time to explain myself just now. I have an appointment four miles away in half an hour’s time. I am late as it is. Williams will get you some lunch. Tell Fairman I shall see him before night. Make yourself perfectly at home, and don’t hurry. But excuse me ; this affair has made me quite behindhand.”

The doctor took a few papers and a book from the table, and before I had time to reply, vanished, much to my relief and satisfaction. My journey homeward

was not a happy one. I felt alarm and agitation, and the beautiful scenery failed to remove or temper them. My heart's dear secret had been once more discovered. Rumour could not omit to convey it speedily to the minister himself. In two directions the flame had now power to advance and spread; and, if the old villager remained faithful, what reason had I to hope that Dr Mayhew would not immediately expose me—yes, must not regard it as his business and duty so to do? Yet one thing was certain. The secret, such as it had become, might, for all practical purposes, be known to the whole world; for unquestionably the shallowest observer was at present able to detect it. The old woman in the village, aged and ignorant as she was, had been skilful enough to discover it when I spoke. The doctor had gathered it from my looks even before I uttered a syllable. What was to hinder the incumbent from reading the tale on my forehead the moment that I again stood in his presence?

Reaching the parsonage, I proceeded at once to the drawing-room, where I expected to see the minister. No one was in the room, but a chair was drawn to the table, and the implements of drawing were before it. Could I not guess who had been the recent tenant of that happy chair—who had been busy there? Forgetful of every thing but her, I stood for a time in silent adoration; then I ventured to approach and gaze upon her handiwork. I shook with joy, with ravishment, and ecstasy, when I beheld it. What was

not made known to me in that one hasty look ! What golden dreams did not engage, what blissful triumph did not elevate, what passionate delight did not overflow my aching heart ! Oh, it was true—and the blessed intelligence came to me with a power and a reality that no language could contain—**SHE LOVED ME !** she, the beloved, the good, the innocent, and pure ! Before me was the scene—the dearest to me in life—through which we had so recently walked together, and upon which she knew I doated, for the sake of her whose presence had given it light and hallowed it. Why had she brought it on the paper ? Why this particular scene, and that fair hillock, but for the sake of him who worshipped them—but that the mysterious and communicable fire had touched her soul, and melted it ? I trembled with my happiness. There was a spot upon the paper —a tear—one sacred drop from the immaculate fount. Why had it been shed ? In joy or pain—for whom—and wherefore ? The paper was still moist—the tear still warm. Happiest and most unfortunate of my race, I pressed it to my lips, and kissed it passionately.

Miss Fairman entered at that moment.

She looked pale and ill. This was not a season for consideration. Before I could speak, I saw her tottering, and about to fall. I rushed to her, and held her in my arms. She strove for recovery, and set herself at liberty ; but she wept aloud as she did so,

and covered her face with her hands. I fell upon my knees, and implored her to forgive me.

“I have been rash and cruel, Miss Fairman; but extend to me your pardon, and I will go for ever, and disturb your peace no more. Do not despise me, or believe that I have deliberately interfered with your happiness, and destroyed my own for ever. Do not hate me when I shall see you no more.”

“Leave me, Mr Stukely, I entreat,” sobbed Miss Fairman, weeping amain. Her hand fell. I was inflamed with passion, and I became indifferent to the claims of duty, which were drowned in the louder clamours of love. I seized that hand and held it firm. It needed not, for the lady sought not to withdraw it.

“I am not indifferent to you, dearest Miss Fairman!” I exclaimed; “you do not hate me—you do not despise me—I am sure you do not. That drawing has revealed to me all that I wish or care to know. I would rather die this moment possessed of that knowledge, than live a monarch without it.”

“Leave me, leave me, I implore you,” faltered Miss Fairman.

“Yes, dearest lady, I must—I shall leave you. I can stay no longer here. Life is valueless now. I have permitted a raging fire to consume me. I have indulged, madly, and fearfully indulged, in error. I have struggled against the temptation. Heaven has willed that I should not escape it. I have

learned that you love me—come what may, I am content."

" If you regard me, Mr Stukely, pity me, and go, now. I beg, I entreat you to leave me."

I raised the quivering hand, and kissed it ardently. I resigned it, and departed.

My whole youth was a succession of inconsiderate yieldings to passion, and of hasty visitings of remorse. It is not a matter of surprise that I hated myself for every word that I had spoken, as soon as I was again master of my conduct. It was my nature to fall into error against conviction and my cool reason, and to experience speedily the reaction that succeeds the commission of exorbitant crimes. In proportion to the facility with which I erred, was the extravagance and exaggeration with which I viewed my faults. During the predominance of a passion, death, surrounded by its terrors, would not have frightened me or driven me back—would not have received my passing notice: whilst it lasted it prevailed. So, afterwards, when all was calm and over, a crushing sense of wrong and guilt magnified the smallest offence, until it grew into a bugbear to scare me night and day. Leaving Miss Fairman, I rushed into the garden, preparatory to running away from the parsonage altogether. This, in the height of remorseful excitement, presented itself to my mind forcibly as the necessary and only available step to adopt: but this

soon came to be regarded as open to numerous and powerful objections.

It seemed impossible that the incumbent could be kept any longer in ignorance of the affair; and it was better—oh! how much better—for my comfort and peace of mind that he should not be. In a few hours Dr Mayhew would arrive, and his shrewd eye would immediately penetrate to the very seat of his patient's disquietude. The discovery would be communicated to her father—and what would he think of me?—what would become of me? I grew as agitated as though the doctor were at that moment seated with the minister—and revealing to his astonished listener the history of my deceit and black ingratitude. The feeling was not to be borne; and, in order to cast it off, I determined myself to be the messenger of the tale, and to stand the brunt of his first surprise and indignation. With the earliest conception of the idea, I ran to put it into execution. Nor did I stop until I reached the door of his study, when the difficulty of introducing at once so delicate a business, and the importance of a little quiet preparation, suggested themselves, and made me hesitate. It was, however, but for a moment for self-possession. I would argue with myself no longer. The few hours that intervened before the arrival of the doctor were my own; and if I permitted them to pass away, my opportunity was gone for ever, and every claim upon the kindness

and forgiveness of my patron lost. I would confess my affection, and offer him the only reparation in my power—to quit his roof, and carry the passion with me for my punishment and torment.

Mr Fairman was alone. The pupils were playing on the lawn upon which the window of the study opened. There they ran, and leaped, and shouted, all feeling and enjoyment, without an atom of the leaden care of life to press upon the light elastic soul; and there stood I, young enough to be a playmate brother, separated from them and their hearts' joyousness by the deep broad line which, once traversed, may never be recovered, ground to the earth by suffering, trial, and disappointment; darkness and discouragement without; misery and self-upbraiding robbing me of peace within. My eyes caught but a glimpse of the laughing boys before they settled on the minister, and summoned me to my ungracious task—and it was a glimpse of a bright and beautiful world, with which I had nothing in common, of which I had known something, it might be ages since—but whose glory had departed even from the memory.

“ Is he here ? ” enquired the incumbent.

“ Doctor Mayhew could not accompany me, sir,” I answered; “ but he will shortly come.”

“ Thank you, Stukely, thank you, I have good news for you. I can afford you time to recruit and be yourself again. The lads return home on Monday next; you shall have a month’s holiday, and you shall spend

it as you will—with us, or elsewhere. If your health will be improved by travelling, I shall be happy to provide you with the means. I cannot afford to loose your services. You must not get ill."

" You are very kind, sir," I replied—" kinder than I deserve."

" That is a matter of opinion, Stukely. I do not think so. You have served me faithfully and well. I consult my own interest in rewarding you, and taking care of yours."

" Yes, sir—but"—

" Well, never mind now. We will not argue on whose side the obligation lies. It is perhaps well that we should both of us think as we do. It is likely that we shall both perform our duty more strictly if we strike the balance against ourselves. Go and refresh yourself. You look tired and worn. Get a glass of wine, and cheer up. Have you seen Miss Fairman?"

" It is concerning her, sir," I answered, trembling in every joint, " that I desire particularly to speak to you."

" Good heaven!" exclaimed the incumbent, starting from his chair, " what do you mean? What is the matter? What has happened? Why do you tremble, Stukely, and look so ghastly pale? What has happened since the morning? What ails her? Go on. Speak. Tell me at once. My poor child—what of her?"

"Calm yourself, I implore you, sir. Miss Fairman is quite well. Nothing has happened. Do not distress yourself. I have done very wrong to speak so indiscreetly. Pardon me, sir. I should have known better. She is well."

Mr Fairman paced the room in perturbation, and held his hand upon his heart to allay its heavy throbs.

"This is very wrong," he said, "very impious. I have thought of nothing else this day—and this is the consequence. I have dwelt upon the probability of calamity, until I have persuaded myself of its actual presence—looked for woe, until I have created it. This is not the patience and resignation which I teach; for shame, for shame!—go to thy closet, worm—repent and pray."

Mr Fairman resumed his seat, and hid his face for a time in his hands. At length he spoke again.

"Proceed, Stukely. I am calm now. The thoughts and fears in which it was most sinful to indulge, and which accumulated in this most anxious breast, are dissipated. What would you say? I can listen as I ought."

"I am glad, sir, that the boys revisit their homes on Monday, and that a month, at least, will elapse before their return to you. In that interval, you will have an opportunity of providing them with a teacher worthier your regard and confidence; and, if I leave you at once, you will not be put to inconvenience."

"I do not understand you."

“ I must resign my office, sir,” I said with trepidation.

“ Resign? Wherefore? What have I said or done?”

“ Let me beg your attention, sir, whilst I attempt to explain my motives, and to do justice to myself and you. I mentioned the name of Miss Fairman.”

“ You did. Ha! Go on, sir.”

“ You cannot blame me, Mr Fairman, if I tell you that, in common with every one whose happiness it is to be acquainted with that lady, I have not been insensible to the qualities which render her so worthy of your love, so deserving the esteem”——I stopped.

“ I am listening, sir—proceed.”

“ I know not how to tell you, sir—in what language to express the growth of an attachment which has taken root in this poor heart, increased and strengthened against every effort which I have made to crush it.”

“ Sir!” uttered the incumbent in great amazement.

“ Do not be angry, Mr Fairman, until you have heard all. I confess that I have been imprudent and rash, that I have foolishly permitted a passion to take possession of my heart, instead of manfully resisting its inroads; but if I have been weak, do not believe that I have been wicked.”

“ Speak plainly, Stukely. What am I to understand by this?”

“ That I have dared, sir, to indulge a fond, a hope-

less love, inspired by the gentlest and most innocent of her sex—that I have striven, and striven, to forget and flee from it—that I have failed—that I come to confess the fault, to ask your pardon, and depart."

"Tell me one thing," asked the incumbent quickly. "Have you communicated your sentiments to Miss Fairman?"

"I have sir."

"Is her illness connected with that declaration?—You do not answer. Stukely, I am deceived in you. I mistrust and doubt you. You have *murdered* my poor child."

"Mr Fairman, do not, I entreat"—

"Heaven have mercy upon me for my wild, uncircumcised temper. I will use no harsh terms. I retract that expression, young man. I am sorry that I used it. Let me know what more you have to say."

The tears came to my eyes, and blinded them. I did not answer.

"Be seated, Stukely," continued the minister in a kinder tone; "compose yourself. I am to blame for using such a term. Forgive me for it—I did not mean all that it conveyed. But you know how fragile and how delicate a plant is that. You should have thought of her and me before you gratified a passion as wild as it is idle. Now, tell me every thing. Conceal and disguise nothing. I will listen to you calmly, and I will be indulgent. The past is not to be recalled. Aid me in the future, if you are generous and just."

I related all that had passed between Miss Fairman and myself—all that had taken place in my own turbulent soul—the battlings of the will and judgment, the determination to overcome temptation, and the sudden and violent yielding to it. Faithful to his command, I concealed nothing, and, at the close of all, I signified my readiness, my wish, and my intention to depart.

“Forgive me, sir, at parting,” said I, “and you shall hear no more of the disturber of your peace.”

“I do not wish that, Stukely. I am indebted to you for the candour with which you have spoken, and the proper view which you take of your position. I wish to hear of you, and to serve you—and I will do it. I agree with you, that you must leave us now—yes, and at once; and, as you say, without another interview. But I will not turn you into the world, lad, without some provision for the present, and good hopes for the future. I owe you much. Yes—very much. When I consider how differently you might behave, how very seriously you might interfere with my happiness”—as Mr Fairman spoke, he opened the drawer of a table, and drew a check-book from it—“I feel that you ought not to be a loser by your honesty. I do not offer you this as a reward for that honesty—far from it—I would only indemnify you—and this is my duty.”

Mr Fairman placed a draft for a hundred pounds in my hand.

“Pardon me, sir,” said I, replacing it on his table. “I can take no money. Millions could not *indemnify* me for all that I resign. Judge charitably, and think kindly of me, sir—and I am paid. Honour is priceless.”

“Well, but when you get to London?”—

“I am not altogether friendless. My salary is yet untouched, and will supply my wants until I find employment.”

“Which you shall not be long without, believe me, Stukely, if I have power to get it you—and I think I have. You will tell me where I may address my letters. I will not desert you. You shall not repent this.”

“I do not, sir; and I believe I never shall. I propose to leave the parsonage to-night, sir.”

“No, to-morrow. We must have some talk. You need not see her. I could not let you go to-night. You shall depart to-morrow; and I rely upon your good sense and honourable feelings to avoid another meeting. It could only increase the mischief that has already taken place, and answer no good purpose. You must be aware of this.”

“I am, sir. You shall have no reason to complain.”

“I am sure of it, Stukely. You had better see about your preparations. John will help you in any way you wish. Make use of him. There must be many little things to do. There can be no impropriety, Stukely, in your accepting the whole of your year’s

salary. You are entitled to that. I am sorry to lose you—very—but there's no help for it. I will come to your room this evening, and have some further conversation. Leave me now."

The incumbent was evidently much excited. Love for his child, and apprehension for her safety, were feelings that were, perhaps, too prominent and apparent in the good and faithful minister of heaven; they betrayed him at times into a self-forgetfulness, and a warmth of expression, of which he repented heartily as soon as they occurred. Originally of a violent and wayward disposition, it had cost the continual exercise and the prayers of a life, to acquire evenness of temper and gentleness of deportment, neither of which, in truth, was easily, if ever disturbed, if not by the amiable infirmity above alluded to. He was the best of men; but to the best, immunity from the natural weakness of mortality is not to be vouchsafed.

Mr Fairman was the last person whom I saw that night. He remained with me until I retired to rest. He was the first person whom I saw on the following morning. I do not believe that he did not rely upon the word which I had pledged to him. I did not suppose that he suspected my resolution; but I am convinced that he was most restless and unhappy, from the moment that I revealed my passion to him, until that which saw me safely deposited at the foot of the hill, on my way to the village. So long as I remained in his house, he could only see danger for his daughter;

and with my disappearance he counted upon her recovery and peace.

The incumbent was himself my companion from the parsonage. The servant had already carried my trunk to the inn. At the bottom of the hill, Mr Fairman stopped and extended his hand.

“Fare-you-well, Stukely,” said he with emotion. “Once more, I am obliged to you. I will never forget your conduct; you shall hear from me.”

Since the conversation of the preceding day, the incumbent had not mentioned the name of his daughter. I had not spoken of her. I felt it impossible *to part* without a word.

“What did Doctor Mayhew say?” I asked.

“She is a little better, and will be soon quite well, we trust.”

“That is good news. Is she composed?”

“Yes—she is better.”

“One question more, sir. Does she know of my departure?”

“She does not—but she will, of course.”

“Do not speak unkindly of me, to her, sir. I should be sorry if she thought ill”—

“She will respect you, Stukely, for the part which you have acted. She must do so. You will respect yourself.”

I had nothing more to say; I returned his warm pressure, and bade him farewell.

“God bless you, lad, and prosper you! We may

meet again in a happier season; but if we do not, receive a father's thanks and gratitude. You have behaved nobly. I feel it—believe me."

Manly and generous tears rushed to the eyes of my venerable friend, and he could not speak. Once more he grasped my hand fervently, and in the saddest silence that I have ever known we separated.

There was gloom around my heart, which the bright sun in heaven, that gladdened all the land, could not penetrate or disperse; but it gave way before a touch of true affection, which came to me as a last memorial of the beloved scene on which I lingered.

I had hardly parted from the minister, before I perceived walking before me, at the distance of a few yards, the youngest of the lads who had been my pupils. At the request of the minister, I had neither taken leave of them, nor informed any one of my departure. The lad whom I now saw was a fine spirited boy, who had strongly attached himself to me, and shown great aptitude, as well as deep desire, for knowledge. He knew very little when I came to him, but great pains had enabled him to advance rapidly. The interest which he manifested, called forth in me a corresponding disposition to assist him; and the grateful boy, altogether overlooking his own exertions, had over and over again expressed himself in the warmest terms of thankfulness for my instruction, to which he insisted he owed all that he had acquired. He was in his eleventh year, and his heart was as kind

and generous as his intellect was vigorous and clear. I came up to him, and found him plucking the wild-flowers from the grass as he wandered slowly along. I looked at him as I passed, and found him weeping.

“ Alfred !” I exclaimed, “ What do you here so early ?”

The boy burst into a fresh flow of tears, and threw himself passionately into my arms. He sobbed piteously, and at length said—

“ Do not go, sir—do not leave me ! You have been so kind to me. Pray, stop.”

“ What is the matter, Alfred ?”

“ John has told me you are going, sir. He has just taken your box down. Oh, Mr Stukely, stay for my sake ! I won’t give you so much trouble as I used to do. I’ll learn my lessons better—but don’t go, pray, sir.”

“ You will have another teacher, Alfred, who will become as good a friend as I am. I cannot stay. Return to the parsonage—there’s a dear boy.”

“ Oh, if you must go, let me walk with you a little, sir ! Let me take your hand. I shall be back in time for breakfast—pray, don’t refuse me that, sir ?”

I complied with his request. He grasped my palm in both his hands, and held it there, as though he would not part with it again. He gave me the flowers which he had gathered, and begged me to keep them for his sake. He repeated every kind thing which I had

done for him, not one of which he would forget, and all the names and dates which he had got by heart, to please his tutor. He told me that it would make him wretched, “to get up to-morrow, and remember that I was gone;” and that he loved me better than any body, for no one had been so indulgent, and had taken such pains to make him a good boy. Before we reached the village, his volubility had changed the tears to smiles. As we reached it, John appeared on his return homeward. I gave the boy into his charge, and the cloud lowered again, and the shower fell heavier than ever. I turned at the point at which the hills became shut out, and there stood the boy fastened to the spot at which I had left him.

At the door of the inn, I was surprised to find my luggage in the custody of Dr Mayhew’s gardener. As soon as he perceived me, he advanced a few steps with the box, and placed a note in my hand. It was addressed to me at the parsonage, and politely requested me to wait upon the physician at my earliest convenience. No mention was made of the object of my visit, or of the doctor’s knowledge of my altered state. The document was as short as it might be, and as courteous. Having read it, I turned to the gardener, or to where he had stood a moment before, with the view of questioning that gentleman; but, to my great astonishment, I perceived him about a hundred yards before me, walking as fast as his load permitted him towards his

master's residence. I called loudly after him, but my voice only acted as a spur, and increased his pace. My natural impulse was to follow him, and I obeyed it.

Dr Mayhew received me at his door with a very cunning smile and a facetious observation.

“ Well, Master Stukely, this hot weather has been playing the deuce with us all. Only think of little puss being attacked with your complaint, the very day you were here suffering so much from it, and my getting a touch myself.”

I smiled.

“ Yes, sir, it is very easy to laugh at the troubles of other men ; but I can tell you this is a very disagreeable epidemic. Severe times these for maids and bachelors. I shall settle in life now, sooner than I intended. I have fallen in love with puss myself.”

I did not smile.

“ To be sure, I am old enough to be her father ; but so much the better for her. No man should marry till fifty. Your young fellows of twenty don't know their own mind—don't understand what love means—all blaze and flash, blue fire and sky-rocket—out in a minute. Eh, what do you say, Stukely ? ”

“ Are you aware, sir, that I have left the parsonage ? ”

“ To be sure I am ; and a pretty kettle of fish you have made of it. Instead of treating love as a quiet and respectable undertaking, as I mean to treat it—instead of simmering your love down to a gentlemanly

respect and esteem, as I mean to simmer it—and waiting patiently for the natural consequences of things, as I mean to wait—you must, like a boy as you are, have it all out in a minute, set the whole house by the ears, and throw yourself out of it without rhyme or reason, or profit to any body. Now, sit down, and tell me what you mean to do with yourself?"

"I intend to go to London, sir."

"Does your father live there?"

"I have no father, sir."

"Well—your mother?"

"She is dead, too. I have one friend there—I shall go to him until I find occupation."

"You naughty boy! How I should like to whip you! What right had you to give away so good a chance as you have had? You have committed a sin, sir—yes, you may look—you have, and a very grievous one. I speak as I think. You have been flying in the face of Providence, and doing worse than hiding the talent which was bestowed upon you for improvement. Do you think I should have behaved so at your age? Do you think any man in the last generation out of a madhouse would have done it? Here's your march of education!"

I bowed to Doctor Mayhew, and wished him good-morning.

"No, thank you, sir," answered the physician; "if I didn't mean to say a little more to you, I shouldn't

have spoken so much already. We must talk these matters over quietly. You may as well stay a few days with your friend in the country, as run off directly to the gentleman in London. Besides, now I have made my mind up so suddenly to get married, I don't know how soon I may be called upon to undergo the operation—I beg the lady's pardon—the awful ceremony. I shall want a bride's-man, and you wouldn't make a bad one by any means."

The physician rang the bell, and Williams the butler—a personage in black, short and stout, and exceedingly well fed, as his sleek face showed—entered the apartment.

"Will you see, Williams, that Mr Stukely's portmanteau is taken to his room—bed quite aired—sheets all right, eh?"

"Both baked, sir," replied Williams with a deferential but expressive smile, which became his face remarkably well.

"Then let us have lunch, Williams, and a bottle of *the sherry*?"

A look accompanied the request, which was not lost upon the butler. He made a profound obeisance, and retired. At lunch the doctor continued his theme, and represented my conduct as most blamable and improper. He insisted that I ought to be severely punished, and made to feel that a boy is not to indulge every foolish feeling that rises, just as he thinks proper; but, like an inconsistent judge, he concluded

the whole of a very powerful and angry summing up, by pronouncing upon me the verdict of an acquittal—inasmuch as he told me to make myself as comfortable as I could in his house, and to enjoy myself thoroughly in it for the next fortnight to come, at the very least. It may have been that, in considering my faults as those of the degenerate age in which I lived—which age, however, be it known, lived afterwards to recover its character, and to be held up as a model of propriety and virtue to the succeeding generation—the merciful doctor was willing to merge my chastisement in that which he bestowed daily upon the unfortunate object of his contempt and pity; or possibly he desired to inflict no punishment at all, but simply to perform a duty incumbent upon his years and station. Be this as it may, certain it is that with the luncheon ended all upbraiding and rebuke, and commenced an unreservedness of intercourse—the basis of a generous friendship, which increased and strengthened day by day, and ended only with the noble-hearted doctor's life—nor then in its effects upon my character and fortune.

It was on the night of the day on which I had arrived, that Doctor Mayhew and I were sitting in his *sanctum*; composedly and happily as men sit whom care has given over for a moment to the profound and stilly influences of the home and hearth. One topic of conversation had given place easily to another, and there seemed at length little to be said on any subject

whatever, when the case of the idiot, which my own troubles had temporarily dismissed from my mind, suddenly occurred to me, and afforded us motive for the prolongation of a discourse which neither seemed desirous to bring to a close.

“ What have you done with the poor fellow ? ” I enquired.

“ Nothing,” replied the physician. “ We have fed him well, and his food has done him good. He is a hundred per cent better than when he came ; but he is still surly and tongue-tied. He says nothing. He is not known in the neighbourhood. I have directed hand-bills to be circulated, and placards to be posted in the villages. If he is not owned within a week, he must be given to the parish-officers. I can’t help thinking that he is a runaway lunatic, and a gentleman by birth. Did you notice his delicate white hand, that diamond ring, and the picture they found tied round his neck ? ”

“ What picture, sir ? ”

“ Did I not tell you of it ? The portrait of a lovely female—an old attachment, I suppose, that turned his brain ; although I fancy sometimes that it is his mother or sister, for there is certainly a resemblance to himself in it. The picture is set in gold. When Robin first discovered it, the agony of the stricken wretch was most deplorable. He was afraid that the man would remove it, and he screamed and implored like a true maniac. When he found that he might

keep it, he evinced the maddest pleasure, and beckoned his keeper to notice and admire it. He pointed to the eyes, and then groaned and wept himself, until Robin was frightened out of his wits, and was on the point of throwing up his office altogether."

"Do you think the man may recover his reason?"

"I have no hope of it. It is a case of confirmed fatuity, I believe. If you like to see him again, you shall accompany me to-morrow when I visit him. What a life is this, Stukely! What a strange history may be that of this poor fellow whom Providence has cast at our door! Well, poor wretch, we'll do the best we can for him. If we cannot reach his mind, we may improve his body, and he will be then perhaps quite as happy as the wisest of us."

The clock struck twelve as Doctor Mayhew spoke. It startled and surprised us both. In a few minutes we separated, and retired to our several beds.

When I saw the idiot on the following day, I could perceive a marked improvement in his appearance. The deadly pallor of his countenance had departed; and although no healthy colour had taken its place, the living blood seemed again in motion, restoring expression to those wan and withered features. His coal-black eye had recovered the faintest power of speculation, and the presence of a stranger was now sufficient to call it into action. He was clean and properly attired, and he sat—apart from his keeper—conscious of existence. There was good ground, in

the absence of all positive proof, for the supposition of the doctor. A common observer would have pronounced him well-born at a glance. Smitten as he was, and unhinged by his sad affliction, there remained still sufficient of the external forms to conduct to such an inference. Gracefulness still hovered about the human ruin, discernible in the most aimless of imbecility's weak movements, and the limbs were not those of one accustomed to the drudgery of life. A melancholy creature truly did he look, as I gazed upon him for a second time. He had carried his chair to a corner of the room, and there he sat, his face half-hidden, resting upon his breast, his knee drawn up and pressed tightly by his clasped hands—those very hands, small and marble-white, forming a ghastful contrast to the raven hair that fell thickly on his back. He had not spoken since he rose. Indeed, since his first appearance, he had said nothing but the unintelligible word which he had uttered four times in my presence, and which Dr Mayhew now believed to be the name of the lady whose portrait he wore. That he could speak was certain, and his silence was therefore the effect of obstinacy or of absolute weakness of intellect, which forbade the smallest mental effort. I approached him, and addressed him in accents of kindness. He raised his head slowly, and looked piteously upon me, but in a moment again he resumed his original position.

For the space of a week I visited the afflicted man

daily, remaining with him perhaps a couple of hours at each interview. No clue had been discovered to his history, and the worthy physician had fixed upon one day after another as that upon which he would relieve himself of his trust; but the day arrived only to find him unwilling to keep his word. The poor object himself had improved rapidly in personal appearance; and, as far as could be ascertained from his gestures and indistinct expressions, was sensible of his protector's charity, and thankful for it. He now attempted to give to his keeper the feeble aid he could afford him; he partook of his food with less avidity, he seemed aware of what was taking place around him. On one occasion I brought his dinner to him, and sat by whilst it was served to him. He stared at me as though he had immediate perception of something unusual. It was on the same day that, whilst trifling with a piece of broken glass, he cut his hand. I closed the wound with an adhesive plaster, and bound it up. It was the remembrance of this act that gained for me the affection of the creature, in whom all affections seemed dried up and dead. When, on the day that succeeded to this incident, Robin, as was his custom, placed before the idiot his substantial meal, the latter turned away from it offended, and would not taste it. I was sent for. The eyes of the imbecile glistened when I entered the apartment, and he beckoned me to him. I sat at his side, as I had done on the day before, and he then, with a smile of

triumph, took his food on his knees, and soon devoured it. When he had finished, and Robin had retired with the tray and implements, the poor fellow made me draw my chair still nearer to his own. He placed his hand upon my knee in great delight, patted it, and then the wound which I had dressed. There was perfect folly in the mode in which he fondled this, and yet a reasonableness which the heart could not fail to detect and contemplate with emotion. First, he gently stroked it, then placed his head upon it in utmost tenderness, then hugged it in his arm and rocked it as a child, then kissed it often with short quick kisses that could scarce be heard; courting my observation with every change of action, making it apparent how much he loved, what care he could bestow, upon the hand which had won the notice and regard of his new friend and benefactor. This over, he pointed to his breast, dallied for a time, and then drew from it the picture which he so jealously carried there. He pressed it between his hands, sighed heavily from his care-crazed heart, and strove to tell his meaning in words which would not flow, in which he knew not how to breathe the bubble-thought that danced about his brain. Closer than ever he approached me, and, with an air which he intended for one of confidence and great regard, he invited me to look upon his treasure. I did so, and, to my astonishment and terror —gazed upon the portrait of the unhappy EMMA HARRINGTON. Gracious God! what thoughts came rushing

into my mind ! It was impossible to err. I, who had passionately dwelt upon those lineaments in all the fondness of a devoted love, until the form became my heart's companion by day and by night—I, who had watched the tear-drops falling from those eyes, in which the limner had not failed to fix the natural sorrow that was a part of them—watched and hung upon them in distress and agony—I, surely I, could not mistake the faithful likeness. Who, then, was *he* that wore it? Who was this, now standing at my side, to turn to whom again became immediately—sickness—horror ! Who could it be but him, the miserable parricide—the outcast—the unhappy brother—the desperately wicked son ! There was no other in the world to whom the departed penitent could be dear ; and he—oh, was it difficult to suppose that merciful Heaven, merciful to the guiltiest, had placed between his conscience and his horrible offence a cloud that made all dim—had rendered his understanding powerless to comprehend a crime which reason must have punished and aggravated endlessly ! My judgment was prostrated by what I learned so suddenly and fearfully. The discovery had been miraculous. What should I do ? How proceed ? How had the youth got here ? What had been his history since his flight ? Whither was he wandering ? Did he know the fate of his poor sister ? How had he lived ? These questions, and others, crowded into my mind one after another, and I trembled with the

violent rapidity of thought. The figure of the unhappy girl presented itself—her words vibrated on my ears —her last dying accents: and I felt that to me was consigned the wretched object of her solicitude and love—that to me Providence had directed the miserable man; yes, if only that he who had shared in the family guilt, might behold and profit by the living witness of the household wreck. Half forgetful of the presence of the brother, and remembering nothing well but *her* and her most pitiable tale, oppressed by a hundred recollections, I pronounced her name.

“ Poor, poor, much-tried Emma ! ” I ejaculated, gazing still upon her image. The idiot leaped from my side at the word, and clapped his hands, and laughed and shrieked. He ran to me again, and seized my palm, and pressed it to his lips. His excitement was unbounded. He could only point to the picture, endeavour to repeat the word which I had spoken, and direct his finger to my lips beseechingly, as though he *prayed* to hear the sound again. Alarmed already at what I had done, and dreading the consequences of a disclosure, because ignorant of the effect it would produce upon the idiot, I checked myself immediately, and spake no more. Robin returned. I contrived to subdue by degrees the sudden ebullition, and having succeeded, I restored the criminal to his keeper, and departed.

It was, however, necessary that I should act in some way, possessed of the information which had so

strangely come to me. I desired to be alone to collect myself, and to determine quietly. I retired to my bedroom, endeavoured to think composedly, and to mark out the line of duty. It was a fruitless undertaking. My mind would rest on nothing but the tragedy in which this miserable creature held so sad a part, and his unlooked-for resuscitation here—here, under the roof which sheltered his sister's paramour. Whether to keep the secret hidden in my bosom, or to communicate it to the physician, was my duty, I could not settle now. It had been a parting injunction of my friend Thompson to sleep upon all matters of difficulty, and to avoid rashness above all things. Alas ! I had not profited by his counsel, nor, in my own case, recurred to it even for a moment; but it was different now. The fate, perhaps the life, of another was involved in my decision ; and not to act upon the good advice, not to be temperate and cautious, would be sinful in the extreme. What, had she been alive, would the sister have required—entreated at my hands ? And now, if the freed spirit of the injured one looked down upon the world, what would it expect from him to whom had been committed the forlorn and stricken wanderer ? What if not justice, charity, and mercy ? “ And he shall have it ! ” I exclaimed. “ I will act on his behalf. I will be cool and calm. I will do nothing until to-morrow, when the excitement of this hour shall have passed away, and reason resumed its proper influence and rule.”

I rose, contented with my conclusion, and walked to the window, which overlooked the pleasure-garden of the house. Robin and his patient were there ; the former sitting on a garden chair, and reposing comfortably after his meal, heedless of the doings of his charge. The latter stood immediately below the window, gazing upwards, with the portrait as before pressed between his marble hands. He perceived me, and screamed in triumph and delight. The keeper started up ; I vanished instantly. He surely could not have known the situation of my room—could not have waited there and watched for my appearance. It was impossible. Yes, I said so, and I attempted to console myself with the assurance ; but my blood curdled with a new conviction that arose and clung to me, and would not be cast off—the certainty that, by the utterance of one word, I had, for good or ill, linked to my future destiny the reasonless and wretched being, who stood and shrieked beneath the casement long after I was gone.

I joined my friend, the doctor, as usual in the evening, and learned from him the news of the day. He had visited his patient at the parsonage, and he spoke favourably of her case. Although she had been told of my absence, she was still not aware that I had quitted the house for ever. Her father thought she was less unquiet, and believed that in a few days all would be forgotten, and she would be herself again. Doctor Mayhew assured me that nothing

could be kinder than the manner in which the incumbent spoke of me, and that it was impossible for any man to feel a favour more deeply than he appeared to appreciate the consideration which I had shown for him. The doctor had been silent as to my actual presence in the vicinity, which, he believed, to have mentioned, would have been to fill the anxious father's heart with alarms and fears, which, groundless as they were, might be productive of no little mischief. I acquiesced in the propriety of his silence, and thanked him for his prudence. Whilst my friend was speaking, I heard a quick and heavy footstep on the stairs, which, causing me to start upon the instant, and hurling sickness to my heart, clearly told, had doubt existed, how strongly apprehension had fixed itself upon me, and how certainly and inextricably I had become connected with the object of my dark and irresistible conceptions. I had no longer an ear for Doctor Mayhew, but the sense followed the footstep until it reached the topmost stair—passed along the passage—and stopped—suddenly at our door. Almost before it stopped, the door was knocked at violently—quickly—loudly. Before an answer could be given, the door itself was opened, and Robin rushed in—scared.

“ What is the matter ? ” I exclaimed, jumping up, and dreading to hear him tell what I felt must come —another tale of horror—another crime—what less than *self-destruction* ? ”

"He's gone, sir—he's gone!" roared the fellow, white as death, and shaking like an aspen.

"Gone—how—who?" enquired the doctor.

"The madman, sir," answered Robin, opening his mouth, and raising his eyebrows, to exhibit his own praiseworthy astonishment at the fact.

"Go on, man," said the doctor. "What have you to say further? How did it happen? Quick!"

"I don't know, sir. I eat something for dinner as disagreed. I have been as sleepy as an owl ever since. We was together in his room, and I just sot down for a minute to think what it could be as I *had* eaten, when I dozed off directly—and when I opened my eyes again, not quite a minute arterwards, I couldn't find him nowheres—and nobody can't neither, and we've been searching the house for the last half hour."

"Foolish fellow—how long was this ago?"

"About an hour, sir."

The doctor said not another word, but taking a candle from the table, quitted the room, and hurried down stairs. I followed him, and Robin, almost frightened out of his wits, trod upon my heel and rubbed against my coat, in his eagerness not to be left behind me. The establishment was, as it is said, at sixes and sevens. All was disorder and confusion, and hustling into the most remote corner of the common room. Mr Williams especially was very much unsettled. He stood in the rear of every body

else, and looked deathly white. It was he who ejaculated something upon the sudden entrance of his master, and was the cause of all the other ejaculations which followed quickly from every member of the household. Doctor Mayhew commanded order, and was not long in bringing it about. The house was searched immediately. Wherever it was supposed that the idiot might hide himself, diligent enquiry was made; cupboards, holes, corners, and cellars. It was in vain. He certainly had escaped. The gardens and paddocks, and fields adjacent, were scoured, and with like success. There was no doubt of it—the idiot was gone—who could tell whither? After two hours' unprofitable labour, Doctor Mayhew was again in his library, very much disturbed in mind, and reproaching himself bitterly for his procrastination. “Had I acted,” said he, “upon my first determination, this would never have happened, and my part in the business would have been faithfully performed. As it is, if any mischief should come to that man, I shall never cease to blame myself, and to be considered the immediate cause of it.” I made no reply. I *could* say nothing. His escape occurring so soon after my identification of the unfortunate creature, had bewildered and confounded me. I could not guess at the motive of his flight, nor conceive a purpose to which it was likely the roused maniac would aspire; but I was satisfied—yes, too satisfied, for to think of it was to chill and freeze the heart’s warm blood—that the

revelation of the day and his removal were in close connexion. Alas, I dared not speak, although my fears distracted me whilst I continued dumb! Arrangements were at last made for watching both within and without the house during the night—messengers were dispatched to the contiguous villages, and all that could be done for the recovery of the runaway was attempted. It was already past twelve o'clock when Dr Mayhew insisted upon my retiring to rest. I did not oppose his wish. He was ill at ease, and angry with himself. Maintaining the silence which I had kept during the evening, I gave him my hand, and took my leave.

I thought I should have dropped dead in the room when, lost in a deep reverie, I opened my chamber-door, and discovered, sitting at the table, the very man himself. *There the idiot sat*, portrait in hand, encountering me with a look of unutterable sorrowfulness. He must have hid himself amongst the folds of the curtains; for this room, as well as the rest, was looked into, and its cupboards investigated. I recoiled with sudden terror, and retreated, but the wretch clasped his hands in agony, and implored me, in gestures which could not be mistaken, to remain. I recovered, gained confidence, and forbore.

“What do you desire with me?” I asked quickly. “Can you speak? Do you understand me?” The unhappy man dropped on his knees, and took my hand—cried like a beaten child—sobbed and groaned. He raised the likeness of his sister to

my eyes, and then I saw the fire sparkling in his own lustrous orb, and the supplication bursting from it, that was not to be resisted. He pointed to his mouth, compelled an inarticulate sound, and looked at me again, to assure me that he had spoken all his faculties permitted him. He waited for my answer.

Melted with pity for the bruised soul before me, I could no longer deny him the gratification he besought.

“Emma!” I ejaculated; “Emma Harrington.”

He wept aloud, and kissed my hand, and put my arm upon his breast, and caressed it with his own weak head. I permitted the affectionate creature to display his childish gratitude, and then, taking him by the wrist, I withdrew him from the room. An infant could not have been more docile with its nurse. In another moment he was again in custody.

It was in vain that I strove to fall asleep, and to forget the circumstances of the day—in vain that I endeavoured to carry out the resolution which I had taken to my pillow. Gladly would I have expelled all thought of the idiot from my mind, and risen on the morrow, prepared by rest and sweet suspension of mental labour for profitable deliberation. Sound as was the advice of my friend, and anxious as I was to follow it, obedience rested not with me, and was impossible. Should I make known the history of the man? Should I discover his crime? This was the question that haunted my repose, and knocked at my

ears until my labouring brain ached in its confusion. What might be the effect of a disclosure upon the future existence of the desolate creature, should he ever recover his reason? Must he not suffer the extreme penalty of the law? It was dreadful to think that his life should be forfeited through, and only through, my agency. There were reasons again, equally weighty, why I should not conceal the facts which were in my possession. How I should have determined at length, I know not, if an argument—founded on selfishness—had not stepped in and turned the balance in favour of the idiot. Alas, how easy is it to decide when self-interest interposes with its intelligence and aid! Neither Mr Fairman nor Doctor Mayhew knew of my connexion with the unfortunate Emma Harrington. To expose the brother would be to commit myself. I was not yet prepared to acknowledge to the father of Miss Fairman, or to his friend, the relation that I had borne to that poor girl. And why not? If to divulge the secret were an act of justice, why should I hesitate to do it on account of the incumbent, with whom I had broken off all intercourse for ever? Ah, did I in truth believe that our separation had been final? Or did I harbour, perhaps against reason and conviction, a hope, a thought of future reconciliation, a shadowy yet not weak belief that all might yet end happily, and that fortune still might favour love! With such faint hope, and such belief, I must have bribed myself to silence; for I left

my couch resolved to keep my secret close. Doctor Mayhew was deep in the contemplation of a map when I joined him at the breakfast-table. He did not take his eyes from it when I entered the apartment, and he continued his investigations some time after I had taken my seat. He raised his head at last, and looked hard at me, apparently without perceiving me, and then he resumed his occupation without having spoken a syllable: after a further study of five or ten minutes, he shook his head, and pressed his lips, and frowned, and stroked his chin, as though he was just arriving at the borders of a notable and great discovery.

"It will be strange indeed!" he muttered to himself.  
"How can we find it out?"

I did not break the thread of cogitation.

"Well," continued Doctor Mayhew, "he must leave this house, at all events. I will run the risk of losing him no longer. I will write this morning to the overseer. Yet I *should* like to know—really—it may be, after all, the case. Stukely, lad, look here. What county is this?" he continued, placing his finger on the map.

Somerset was written in the corner of it, and accordingly I answered.

"Very well," replied the doctor. Now, look here. Read this. What do these letters spell?"

He pointed to some small characters, which formed evidently the name of a village that stood upon the

banks of a river of some magnitude. I spelt them as he desired, and pronounced, certainly to my own surprise, the word—“*Belton.*”

“Just so. Well, what do you say to that? I think I have hit it. That’s the fellow’s home. I never thought of that before, and I shouldn’t now, if I hadn’t had occasion for the road-book. It was the first thing that caught my eye. Now—how can we find it out?”

“It is difficult!” said I.

“It is likely enough, you see. What should bring him so far westward, if he hadn’t some object? He was either wandering from or to his home, depend upon it, when the gipsies found him. If Belton be his home, his frequent repetition of the word was natural enough. Eh, don’t you see it?”

“Certainly,” said I.

“Very well; then, what’s to be done?”

“I cannot tell,” I answered.

The doctor rung the bell.

“Is Robin up yet?” he asked, when Williams came in to answer it.

“He is, sir.”

“And the man?”

“Both, sir. They have just done breakfast.”

“Very well, Williams, you may go. Now, follow me, Stukely,” continued the physician, the moment that the butler had departed. “I’ll do it now. I am

a physiognomist, and I'll tell you in the twinkling of an eye if we are right. You mark him well, and so will I." The doctor seized his map and road-book, and before I could speak was out of the room. When I overtook him, he had already reached the idiot, and dismissed Robin.

My friend commenced his operations by placing the map and book upon the table, and closely scanning the countenance of his patient, in order to detect and fix the smallest alteration of expression in the coming examination. He might have spared himself the trouble. The idiot had no eye for him. When I appeared he ran to me, and manifested the most extravagant delight. He grasped my hand, and drew me to his chair, and there detained me. He did not introduce his treasure ; but I could fail to perceive that he intended to repeat the scene of the previous day, as soon as we were again alone. I did not wish to afford him opportunity, and I gladly complied with the physician's request when he called upon me to interrogate the idiot, in the terms he should employ. He had already himself applied to the youth ; but neither for himself nor his questions could he obtain the slightest notice. The eye, the heart, and, such as it was, the mind of the idiot, were upon his sister's friend.

" Ask him, Stukely," began the doctor, " if he has ever been in Somerset ? "

I did so, and, in truth, the word roused from their

long slumber, or we believed they did, recollections that argued well for the physician's theory. The idiot raised his brow, and smiled.

The doctor referred to his map, and said, whispering as before, "Mention the river Parret."

I could not doubt that the name had been familiar to the unhappy man. He strove to speak, and could not; but he nodded his head affirmatively and quickly, and the expression of his features corroborated the strong testimony.

"Now—*Belton?*" added the doctor.

I repeated the word, and then the agony of supplication which I had witnessed once before was re-enacted, and the shrill and incoherent cries burst from his afflicted breast.

"I am satisfied!" exclaimed the doctor shutting his book. "He shall leave my house for Belton this very afternoon."

And so he did. In an hour, arrangements were in progress for his departure, and I was his guardian and companion. Robin, as soon as Dr Mayhew's intention was known, refused to have any thing more to say, either inside the house or out of it, to the *devil incarnate*, as he was pleased to call the miserable man. If his place depended upon his taking charge of him, he was ready to resign it. There was not another man whom the physician seemed disposed to trust, and in his difficulty he glanced at me. I understood his meaning. He proceeded to express his surprise and

pleasure at finding an attachment so strong towards me on the part of the idiot. "It was remarkable," he said—"very! And what a pity it was that he hadn't cultivated the same regard for somebody else. A short journey *then*, to Somerset, would have been the easiest thing in the world. Nothing but to pop into the coach, to go to an inn on arriving in Belton, and to make enquiries, which, no doubt, would be satisfactorily answered in less than no time. Yes, really, it was a hundred pities!"

The doctor looked at me again, and then I had already determined to meet the request he was not bold to ask. I believed, equally with the physician, from the conduct and expressions of young Harrington, that the riddle of his present condition waited for explanation in the village, whose name seemed like a load upon his heart, and constituted the whole of his discourse since he had arrived amongst us. It was there he yearned to be. It was necessary only to mention the word to throw him into an agitation, which it took hours entirely to dissipate. Yes, for a reason well known to him, and hidden from us all, his object, his only object as it appeared, was to be removed, and to be conducted thither. I had but one reason for rejecting the otherwise well-sustained hypothesis of my friend. During my whole intercourse with Emma, I had never heard her speak of Somerset or Belton, and in her narrative no illusion was made either to the shire or village. In what way, then,

could it be so intimately connected with her brother —whence was the origin of the hold which this one word had taken of his shattered brain? I could not guess. But, on the other hand, it was true that I was ignorant of his history subsequently to the fearful death of his most sinful father. How could I tell what new events had arisen, what fresh relations might have sprung up, to attach and bind him to one particular spot of ground? Urged by curiosity to discover all that yet remained to know of his career, and more by a natural and strong desire to serve the youth—not to desert him in the hour of his extremity, I resolved, with the first hint of the doctor, to become myself the fellow-traveller of his *protégé*. I told him so, and the doctor shook me by the hand, and thanked me heartily.

That very evening we were on our road, for our preparations were not extensive. My instructions were to carry him direct to Belton, to ascertain, if possible, from his movements, the extent of his acquaintance with the village, and to present him at all places of resort, in the hope of having him identified. Two days were granted for our stay. If he should be unknown, we were then to return, and Doctor Mayhew would at once resign him to the parish. These were his words at parting. We had no opposition in the idiot. His happiness was perfect whilst I remained with him. He followed me eagerly whithersoever I went, and was willing to be led, so

long as I continued guide. I took my seat in the coach, and he placed himself at my side, trembling with joyousness, and laughing convulsively. Once seated, he grasped my hand as usual, and did not, through the livelong night, relinquish it altogether. A hundred affectionate indications escaped him, and in the hour of darkness and of quiet, it would have been easy to suppose that an innocent child was nestling near me, *homeward bound*, and, in the fulness of its expectant bliss, lavish of its young heartfelt endearments. Yes, it would have been, but for other thoughts, blacker than the night itself—how much more fearful!—which rendered every sign of fondness a hollow, cold, and dismal mockery. Innocence! Alas, poor parricide!

In the morning the sun streamed into the coach, of which we were the only inside passengers. Dancing and playing came the light, now here, now there, skipping along the seat, and settling nowhere—cheerful visitant, and to the idiot something more; for he gazed upon it, and followed its fairy motion, lost in wonder and delight. He looked from the coach-window, and beheld the far-spreading fields of beauty with an eye awakened from long lethargy and inaction. He could not gaze enough. And the voice of nature made giddy the sense of hearing that drank intoxication from the notes of birds, the gurgling of a brook, the rustling of a thousand leaves. His feeble powers, taken by surprise, were vanquished by the

summer's loveliness. Once, when our coach stopped, a peasant girl approached us with a nosegay, which she entreated me to buy. My fellow-traveller was impatient to obtain it. I gave it to him, and, for an hour, all was neglected for the toy. He touched the flowers one by one, viewed them attentively and lovingly, as we do children whom we have known, and watched, and loved from infancy—now caressing this, now smiling upon that. What recollections did they summon in the mind of the destitute and almost mindless creature? What pictures rose there?—pictures that may never be excluded from the soul of man, however dim may burn the intellectual light. His had been no happy boyhood; yet, in the wilderness of his existence, there must have been vouchsafed to him in mercy the few green spots that serve to attach to earth the most afflicted and forlorn of her sad children. How natural for the glimpses to revisit the broken heart, thus employed, thus roused and animated by the light of heaven, rendering all things beautiful and glad!

As we approached the village, my companion ceased to regard his many-coloured friends with the same exclusive attention and unmixed delight. His spirits sank—his joy fled. Clouds gathered across his brow; he withdrew his hand from mine, and he sat for an hour, brooding. He held the neglected nosegay before him, and plucked the pretty leaves one by one—not conscious, I am sure, of what he did. In a short time

every flower was destroyed, and lay in its fragments before him. Then, as if stung by remorse for the cruel act, or shaken by the heavy thoughts that pressed upon his brain, he covered his pallid face, and groaned bitterly. What were those thoughts? How connected with the resting-place towards which we were hastening rapidly? My own anxiety became intense.

The village of Belton, situated near the mouth, and at the broadest part of the river Parret, consisted of one long narrow street, and a few houses scattered here and there on the small eminences which sheltered it. The adjacent country was of the same character as that which we had quitted—less luxuriant, perhaps, but still rich and striking. We arrived at mid-day. I determined to alight at the inn at which the coach put up, and to make my first enquiries there. From the moment that we rattled along the stones that formed the entrance to the village, an unfavourable alteration took place in my companion. He grew excited and impatient; and his lips quivered, and his eyes sparkled, as I had never seen them before. I was satisfied that we had reached the object of his long desire, and that in a few minutes the mysterious relation in which he stood to the place would be ascertained. “He **MUST** be known,” I continued to repeat to myself; “the first eye that falls on him will recognize him instantly.” We reached the inn; we alighted. The landlord and the ostler came to the coach-door, and received us with extreme civility.

The former assisted the idiot in his eager endeavour to reach the ground—I watched the action, expecting him to start, to speak, to claim acquaintance; and, having completed the polite intention, he stood smiling and scraping. I looked at him, then at the idiot, and saw at once that they were strangers. A dozen idlers stood about the door. I waited for a recognition: none came.

Seated in the parlour of the inn, I asked to see the landlady. The sight of the idiot caused as little emotion in her, as it had produced in her husband. I ordered dinner for him. Whilst it was preparing, I engaged the landlord in conversation at the door. I did not wish to speak before young Harrington. I dared not leave him. I enquired, first, if the face of the idiot were familiar to him. I received for answer, that the man had never seen him in his life before, nor had his wife.

“Do you know the name of Harrington?” said I.

“No—never heard on it,” was the reply.

“Fitzjones, perhaps?”

“Many Joneses hereabouts, sir,” said the landlord, “but none of that there Christian name.”

The excitement of the idiot did not abate. He would not touch his food nor sit quietly; but he walked swiftly up and down the room, breathing heavily, and trembling with increasing agitation. He urged me in his own peculiar way to leave the house and walk abroad. He pointed to the road, and strove

to speak. The attempt was fruitless, and he paced the room again, wringing his hands, and sighing sorrowfully. At length I yielded to his request, and we were again in the village, I following whithersoever he led me. He ran through the street, like a madman as he was, bringing upon him the eyes of every one, and outstripping me speedily. He stopped for a moment to collect himself—looked round as though he had lost his way, and knew not whither to proceed; then bounded off again, the hunted deer not quicker in his flight, and instantly was out of sight. Without the smallest hope of seeing him again, I pursued the fugitive, and, as well as I could guess it, continued in his track. For half a mile I traced his steps, and then I lost them. His last footmark was at the closed gate of a good-sized dwelling-house. The roof and highest windows only of the habitation were to be discerned from the path, and these denoted the residence of a wealthy man. He could have no business here—no object. “He must have passed,” thought I, “upon the other side.” I was about to cross the road, when I perceived, at the distance of a few yards, a man labouring in a field. I accosted him, and asked if he had seen the idiot.

No—he had not. He was sure that nobody had passed by him for hours. He must have seen the man if he had come that way.

“Whose house is that?” I asked, not knowing *why* I asked the question.

"What? that?" said he, pointing to the gate.  
"Oh, that's Squire *Temple's!*"

The name dropped like a knife upon my heart. I could not speak. I must have fallen to the earth, if the man, seeing me grow pale as death, had not started to his feet and intercepted me. I trembled with a hundred apprehensions. My throat was dry with fright, and I thought I should have choked. What follows was like a hideous dream. The gate was opened suddenly. JAMES TEMPLE issued from it, and passed me like an arrow. He was appalled and terror-stricken. Behind him—within six feet—almost upon him, yelling fearfully, was the brother of the girl he had betrayed and ruined—his friend and school-fellow, the miserable Frederick Harrington. I could perceive that he held aloft, high over his head, the portrait of his sister. It was all I saw and could distinguish. Both shot by me. I called to the labourer to follow; and, fast as my feet could carry me, I went on. Temple fell. Harrington was down with him. I reached the spot. The hand of the idiot was on the chest of the seducer, and the picture was thrust in agony before his shuddering eyes. There was a struggle—the idiot was cast away, and Temple was once more dashing onward. On, on!—after him! shrieked the idiot. They reached the river's edge. "What now—what now?" I exclaimed, beholding them from afar, bewildered and amazed. The water does not restrain the scared spirit of the pursued.

He rushes on, leaps in, and trusts to the swift current. So also the pursuer, who, with one long, loud, exclamation of triumph, still with his treasure in his grasp, springs vehemently forward, and sinks, once and for ever. And the betrayer beats his way onward, aimless and exhausted, but still he nears the shore. Shall he reach it? Never!

## PART THE LAST.

## TRANQUILLITY.

"Mourn not for her! for what hath life to give  
That should detain her ready spirit here?  
Thinkest thou that it were worth a wish to live,  
Could wishes hold her from her proper sphere?  
That simple heart, that innocence sincere,  
The world would stain. Fitter she ne'er could be  
For the great change; and now that change is near,  
Oh! who would keep her soul from being free?  
Maiden, beloved of Heaven, to die is best for thee."

SOUTHEY.

"Time on this head hath snow'd, yet still 'tis borne  
Aloft, nor thinks but on another's grave."

YOUNG.

THE sudden and unlooked-for appearance of James Temple threw light upon a mystery. Further explanation awaited me in the house from which the unfortunate man had rushed to meet instant death and all its consequences. It will be remembered that, in the narrative of his victim, mention is made of one Mrs Wybrow, with whom the poor girl, upon the loss of her father, and of all means of support, obtained a temporary home. It appeared that Frederick Harrington, a few months after his flight, returned secretly

to the village, and, at the house of that benevolent woman, made earnest application for his sister. He was then excited and half insane, speaking extravagantly of his views and his intentions in respect of her he came to take away. "She should be a duchess," he said, "and must take precedence of every lady in the land. He was a king himself, and could command it so. He could perform wonders, if he chose to use the power with which he was invested; but he would wait until his sister might reap the benefit of his acquired wealth." In this strain he continued, alarming the placid Mrs Wybrow, who knew not what to do to moderate the wildness and the vehemence of his demeanour. Hoping, however, to appease him, she told him of the good fortune of his sister—how she had obtained a happy home, and how grateful he ought to be to Providence for its kind care of her. Much more she said, only to increase the anger of the man, whose insane pride was roused to fury the moment that he heard his sister was doomed to eat the bread of a dependent. He disdained the assistance of Mrs Temple—swore it was an artifice, a cheat, and that he would drag her from the net into which they had enticed her. When afterwards he learned that it was through the mediation of James Temple that his sister had been provided for, the truth burst instantly upon him, and he foresaw at once all that actually took place. He vowed that he would become himself the avenger of his sister, and that he would not let her

betrayer sleep until he had wrung from him deep atonement for his crime. It was in vain that Mrs Wybrow sought to convince him of his delusion. He would not be advised—he would not listen—he would not linger another moment in the house, but quitted it, wrought to the highest pitch of rage, and speaking only of vengeance on the seducer. He set out for London. Mrs Wybrow, agitated more than she had been at any time since her birth, and herself almost deprived of reason by her fears for the safety of Miss Harrington, James Temple, and the furious lunatic himself, wrote immediately to Emma, then resident in Cambridge, explaining the sad condition of her brother, and warning her of his approach—Emma having already (without acquainting Mrs Wybrow with her fallen state) forwarded her address, with a strict injunction to her humble friend to convey to her all information of her absent brother which she could possibly obtain. The threatened danger was communicated to the lover—darkened his days for a time with anxiety and dread, but ceased as time wore on, and as no visitant appeared to affect the easy tenor of his immoral life. The reader will not have forgotten, perhaps, that when for the first time I beheld James Temple, he was accompanied by an elder brother. It was from the latter, his friend and confidant, that the above particulars, and those which follow in respect of the deceased, were gathered. The house in which, for a second time, I encountered my ancient college

friends, was their uncle's. Parents they had none. Of father and of mother both they had been deprived in infancy; and, from that period, their home had been with their relative and guardian. The conduct of one charge, at least, had been from boyhood such as to cause the greatest pain to him who had assumed a parent's cares. Hypocrisy, sensuality, and—for his years and social station—unparalleled dishonesty, had characterised James Temple's short career. By some inexplicable tortuosity of mind, with every natural endowment, with every acquired advantage, graced with the borrowed as well as native ornaments of humanity, he found no joy in his inheritance, but sacrificed it all, and crawled through life a gross and earthy man. The seduction of Emma, young as he was when he committed that offence, was, by many, not the first crime for which—not, thank Heaven ! without some preparation for his trial—he was called suddenly to answer. As a boy, he had grown aged in vice. It has been stated that he quitted the university the very instant he disengaged himself of the girl whom he had sacrificed. He crept to the metropolis, and for a time there hid himself. But it was there that he was discovered by Frederick Harrington, who had pursued the destroyer with a perseverance that was indomitable, and scoffed at disappointment. How the lunatic existed no one knew; how he steered clear of transgression and restraint was equally difficult to explain. It was evident enough that he made himself acquainted

with the haunts of his former schoolfellow ; and, in one of them, he rushed furiously and unexpectedly upon him, affrighting his intended victim, but failing in his purpose of vengeance by the very impetuosity of his assault. Temple escaped. Then it was that the latter, shaken by fear, revealed to his brother the rise and progress of his intimacy with the discarded girl, and, in his extremity, called upon him for advice and help. He could afford him none ; and the seducer found himself in the world without an hour's happiness or quiet. What quails so readily as the heartless soul of the sensualist ? Who so cowardly as the man only courageous in his oppression of the weak ? The spirit of Temple was laid prostrate. He walked, and eat, and slept, in base and dastard fear. Locks and bolts could not secure him from dismal apprehensions. A sound shook him, as the unseen wind makes the tall poplar shudder—a voice struck terror in his ear, and sickness to his recreant heart. He could not be alone—for alarm was heightened by the speaking conscience that pronounced it just. He journeyed from place to place, his brother ever at his side, and the shadow of the avenger ever stalking in the rear, and impelling the weary wanderer still onward. The health of the sufferer gave way. To preserve his life, he was ordered to the south-western coast. His faithful brother was his companion still. He had not received a week's benefit from the mild and grateful climate—he was scarcely settled in the tranquil village in which they

had fixed their residence, before the old terror was made manifest, and hunted the unhappy man away. Whilst sitting at his window, and gazing with something of delight upon the broad and smooth blue sea—for who can look, criminal though he be, upon that glorious sheet in summer time, when the sky is bright with beauty, and the golden sun is high, and not lose somewhat of the heavy sense of guilt—not glow, it may be, with a returning gush of childhood's innocence, long absent, and coming now only to reproach and then depart?—whilst sitting there and thus, the sick man's notice was invited to a crowd of yelling boys, who had amongst them one, the tallest of their number, whom they dragged along for punishment or sport. He was an idiot. Who he was none knew so well as the pale man that looked upon him, who could not drag his eye away, so lost was it in wonder, so transfixed with horror. The invalid remained no longer there. Fast as horses could convey him, he journeyed homeward; and, in the bosom of his natural protectors, he sought for peace he could not gain elsewhere. Here he remained, the slave of fear, the conscience-stricken, diseased in body—almost spent; and here he would have died, had not Providence directed the impotent mind of the imbecile to the spot, and willed it otherwise. I have narrated, as shortly as I might, the history of my earliest college friend, as I received it from his brother's lips. There remained but a few words to say—the pleasantest that

I have had to speak of him. James Temple did not die a hardened man. If there be truth in tears, in prayers of penitence that fall from him who stands upon the borders of eternity—who can gain nothing by hypocrisy, and may lose by it the priceless treasure of an immortal soul—if serenity and joy are signs of a repentance spoken, a forgiveness felt, then Heaven had assuredly been merciful with the culprit, and had remitted his offences, as Heaven can, and will, remit the vilest.

I remained in the village of Belton until I saw all that remained of the school-fellows deposited in the earth. Their bodies had been easily obtained—that of the idiot, indeed, before life had quitted it. The evening that followed their burial, I passed with William Temple. Many a sad reminiscence occurred to him which he communicated to me without reserve, many a wanton act of coarse licentiousness, many a warning unheeded, laughed at, spurned. It is a mournful pleasure for the mind, as it dwells upon the doings of the departed, to build up its own theories, and to work out a history of what might have been in happier circumstances—a useless history of *ifs*. “If my brother had been looked to when he was young,” said William Temple more than once, “he would have turned out differently. My uncle spoiled him. As a child, he was never corrected. If he wished for a toy, he had but to scream for it. If, at school, he had been fortunate enough to contract his friendships with young

men of worth and character, their example would have won him to rectitude, for he was always a lad easily led." And again, "If he had but listened to the advice which, when it would have served him, I did not fail daily and hourly to offer him, he might have lived for years, and been respected—for many know, I lost no opportunity to draw him from his course of error." Alas ! how vain, how idle was this talk—how little it could help the clod that was already crumbling in the earth—the soul already at the judgment-seat; yet with untiring earnestness the brother persisted in this strain, and with every new hypothesis found fresh satisfaction. There was more reason for gratification when, at the close of the evening, the surviving relative turned from his barren discourse, and referred to the last days of the deceased. There was comfort and consolation to the living in the evidences which he produced of his most blessed change. It was a joy to me to hear of his repentance, and to listen to the terms in which he made it known. I did not easily forget them. I journeyed homeward. When I arrived at the house of Dr Mayhew, I was surprised to find how little I could remember of the country over which I had travelled. The scenes through which I had passed were forgotten—had not been noticed. Absorbed by the thoughts which possessed my brain, I had suffered myself to be carried forward, conscious of nothing but the waking dreams. I was prepared, however, to see my friend. Still influenced by the

latent hope of meeting once more with Miss Fairman, still believing in the happy issue of my love, I had resolved to keep my own connexion with the idiot as secret as the grave. There was no reason why I should betray myself. His fate was independent of my act —my conduct formed no link in the chain which must be presented to make the history clear: and shame would have withheld the gratuitous confession, had not the ever present, never-dying promise forbade the disclosure of one convicting syllable. As may be supposed, the surprise of Doctor Mayhew, upon hearing the narrative, was no less than the regret which he experienced at the violent death of the poor creature in whom he had taken so kind and deep an interest. But a few days sufficed to sustain his concern for one who had come to him a stranger, and whom he had known so short a time. The pursuits and cares of life gradually withdrew the incident from his mind, and all thoughts of the idiot. He ceased to speak of him. To me, the last scene of his life was present for many a year. I could not remove it. By day and night it came before my eyes, without one effort on my part to invoke it. It has started up, suddenly and mysteriously, in the midst of enjoyment and serene delight, to mingle bitterness in the cup of earthly bliss. It has come in the season of sorrow to heighten the distress. Amongst men, and in the din of business, the vision has intruded, and in solitude it has followed me to throw its shadows across the bright green fields, beautiful in

their freshness. Night after night—I cannot count their number—it has been the form and substance of my dreams; and I have gone to rest—yes, for months—with the sure and natural expectation of beholding the melancholy repetition of an act which I would have given any thing, and all I had, to forget and drive away for ever.

A week passed pleasantly with my host. I spoke of departure at the end of it. He smiled when I did so, bade me hold my tongue and be patient. I suffered another week to glide away, and then hinted once more that I had trespassed long enough upon his hospitality. The doctor placed his hand upon my arm, and answered quickly, “All in good time—do not hurry.” His tone and manner confirmed, I know not why, the strong hope within me, and his words passed with meaning to my heart. I already built upon the aerial foundation, and looked forward with joyous confidence and expectation. The arguments and shows of truth are few that love requires. The poorest logic is the soundest reasoning—if it conclude for him. The visits to the parsonage were, meanwhile, continued. Upon my return, I gained no news. I asked if all were well there, and the simple monosyllable “Yes,” answered with unusual quickness and decision, was all that escaped the doctor’s lips. He did not wish to be interrogated further, and was displeased. I perceived this, and was silent. For some days, no mention was made of his dear friend the minister. He was accustomed to speak

often of that man, and most affectionately. What was the inference? A breach had taken place. If I entertained the idea for a day, it was dissipated on the next; for the doctor, a week having elapsed since his last visit, rode over to the parsonage as usual, remained there some hours, and returned in his best and gayest spirits. He spoke of the Fairmans during the evening with the same kind feeling and good-humour that had always accompanied his allusions to them and their proceedings, and grew at length eloquent in the praises of them both. The increasing beauty of the young mistress, he said, was marvellous. "Ah," he added slyly, and with more truth, perhaps, than he suspected, "it would have done your eyes good to-day, only to have got one peep at her." I sighed, and he tantalized me further. He pretended to pity me for the inconsiderate haste with which I had thrown up my employment, and to condole with me for all I had lost in consequence. "As for himself," he said, "he had, upon further consideration, given up all thought of marriage for the present. He should live a little longer and grow wiser; but it was not a pleasant thing, by any means, to see so sweet a girl taken coolly off by a young fellow, who, if all he heard was true, was very likely to have an early opportunity. I sighed again, and asked permission to retire to rest; but my tormentor did not grant it, until he had spoken for half an hour longer, when he dismissed me in a state of misery incompatible with rest, in bed, or out of it. My

heart was bursting when I left him. He could not fail to mark it. To my surprise, he made another excursion to the parsonage on the following day; and, as before, he joined me in the evening with nothing on his lips but commendation of the young lady whom he had seen, and complaint at the cruel act which was about to rob them of their treasure; for he said, regardless of my presence or the desperate state of my feelings, "that the matter was now all but settled. Fairman had made up his mind, and was ready to give his consent the very moment the young fellow was bold enough to ask it. And lucky dog he is too," added the kind physician, by way of a conclusion; "for little puss herself is over head and ears in love with him, or else I never made a right prognosis."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," I answered, when Doctor Mayhew paused; "very grateful for your hospitality. If you please, I will depart to-morrow. I trust you will ask me to remain no longer. I cannot do so. My business in London"—

"Oh, very well! but that can wait, you know," replied the doctor, interrupting me. "I can't spare you to-morrow. I have asked a friend to dinner, and you must meet him."

"Do not think me ungrateful, doctor," I answered; "but positively I must and will depart to-morrow. I cannot stay."

"Nonsense, man—you shall. Come, say you will, and I engage, if your intention holds, to release you as

early as you like the next day. I have promised my friend that you will give him the meeting, and you must not refuse me. Let me have my way to-morrow, and you shall be your own master afterwards."

"Upon such terms, sir," I answered immediately, "it would be unpardonable if I persisted. You shall command me; on the following day I will seek my fortunes in the world again."

"Just so," replied the doctor, and so we separated.

The character of Dr Mayhew was little known to me. His goodness of heart I had reason to be acquainted with; but his long-established love of jesting, his intense appreciation of a joke, practical or otherwise, I had yet to learn. In few men are united as happily as they were in him, a steady application to the business of the world, and an almost unrestrained indulgence in its harmless pleasantries. The grave doctor was a boy at his fireside. I spent my last day in preparing for my removal, and in rambling for some hours amongst the hills, with which I had become too familiar to separate without a pang. Long was our leave-taking. I lingered and hovered from nook to nook, until I had expended the latest moment which it was mine to give. With a burdened spirit I returned to the house, as my thoughts shifted to the less pleasing prospect afforded by my new position. I shuddered to think of London, and the fresh vicissitudes that awaited me.

It wanted but a few minutes to dinner when I step-

ped into the drawing-room. The doctor had just reached home, after being absent on professional duty since the morning. The visitor had already arrived; I had heard his knock whilst I was dressing. Having lost all interest in the doings of the place, I had not even cared to enquire his name. What was it to me? What difference could the chance visitor of a night make to me, who was on the eve of exile? None. I walked despondingly into the room, and advanced with distant civility towards the stranger. His face was from me, but he turned instantly upon hearing my step, and I beheld—Mr Fairman. I could scarcely trust my eyes. I started and retreated. My reverend friend, however, betrayed neither surprise nor discomposure. He smiled kindly, held out his hand, and spoke as he was wont in the days of cordiality and confidence. What did it mean?

“It is a lovely afternoon, Stukely,” began the minister, “worthy of the ripe summer in which it is born.”

“It is, sir,” I replied; “but I shall see no more of them,” I added *instantly*, anxious to assure him that I was not lurking with sinister design so near the parsonage—that I was on the eve of flight. “I quit our friend to-morrow, and must travel many miles away.”

“You will come to us, Stukely,” answered Mr Fairman mildly.

“Sir!” said I, doubting if I heard aright.

“ Has Doctor Mayhew said nothing then ? ” he asked.

I trembled in every limb.

“ Nothing, sir,” I answered. “ Oh, yes ! I recollect—he did—he has—but what have I—I have no wish—no business”—

The door opened, and Dr Mayhew himself joined us, rubbing his hands, and smiling, in the best of good tempers. In his rear followed the faithful Williams. Before a word of explanation could be offered, the latter functionary announced “ *dinner*,” and summoned us away. The presence of the servants during the meal interfered with the gratification of my unutterable curiosity. Mr Fairman spoke most affably on different matters, but did not once revert to the previous subject of discourse. I was on thorns. I could not eat. I could not look at the minister without anxiety and shame ; and whenever my eye caught that of the doctor, I was abashed by a look of meaning and good-humoured cunning, that was half intelligible and half obscure. Rays of hope penetrated to my heart’s core, and illuminated my existence. The presence of Mr Fairman could not be without a purpose. What was it, then ? Oh, I dared not trust myself to ask the question ! The answer bred intoxication and delight, too sweet for earth. What meant that wicked smile upon the doctor’s cheek ? He was too generous and good to laugh at my calamity. He could not do it. Yet the undisturbed demeanour of

the minister confounded me. If there had been connected with this visit so important an object as that which I longed to believe was linked with it, there surely would have been some evidence in his speech and manner, and he continued as cheerful and undisturbed as if his mind were free from every care and weighty thought. "What can it mean?" I asked myself, again and again. "How can he coolly bid me to his house, after what has passed, after his fearful anxiety to get me out of it? Will he hazard another meeting with his beloved daughter?—Ah, I see it!" I suddenly and mentally exclaimed; "it is clear enough—she is absent—she is away. He wishes to evince his friendly disposition at parting, and now he can do it without risk or cost." It was a plain elucidation of the mystery—it was enough, and all my airy castles tumbled to the earth, and left me there in wretchedness. Glad was I when the dinner was concluded, and eager to withdraw. I had resolved to decline, at the first opportunity, the invitation of the incumbent. I did not wish to grieve my heart in feasting my eyes upon a scene crowded with fond associations, to revoke feelings in which it would be folly to indulge again, and which it were well to annihilate and forget. I was about to beg permission to leave the table, when Dr Mayhew rose; he looked archly at me when I followed his example, and requested me not to be in haste; "he had business to transact, and would rejoin us shortly." Saying

these words, he smiled and vanished. I remained silent. To be left alone with Mr Fairman, was the most annoying circumstance that could happen in my present mood. There were a hundred things which I burned to know, whilst I lacked the courage to enquire concerning one. But I had waited for an opportunity to decline his invitation. Here it was, and I had not power to lift my head and look at him. Mr Fairman himself did not speak for some minutes. He sat thoughtfully, resting his forehead in the palm of his hand—his elbow on the table. At length he raised his eyes, and, whilst my own were still bent downward, I could feel that his were fixed upon me.

“Caleb,” said the minister.

It was the first time that the incumbent had called me by my Christian name. How strangely it sounded from his lips! How exquisitely grateful it dropt upon my ear!

“Tell me, Caleb,” continued Mr Fairman, “did I understand you right? Is it true that Mayhew has told you nothing?”

“Nothing distinctly, sir,” I answered—“I have gathered something from his hints, but I know not what he says in jest and what in earnest.”

“I have only her happiness at heart, Stukely—from the moment that you spoke to me on the subject, I have acted solely with regard to that. I hoped to have smothered this passion in the bud. In

attempting it, I believed I was acting as a father should, and doing my duty by her."

The room began to swim round me, and my head grew dizzy.

"I am to blame, perhaps, as Mayhew says, for having brought you together, and for surrounding her with danger. I should have known that to trifle with a heart so guileless and so pure was cruel and unjust, and fraught with perilous consequences. I was blind, and I am punished for my act."

I looked at him at length.

"I use the word deliberately—*punished*, Stukely. It *is* a punishment to behold the affection of which I have ever been too jealous, departing from me, and ripening for another. Why have I cared to live since Heaven took her mother to itself—but for her sake, for her welfare, and her love? But sorrow and regret are useless now. You do not know, young man, a thousandth part of your attainment when I tell you, you have gained her young and virgin heart. I oppose you no longer—I thwart not—render yourself worthy of the precious gift."

"I cannot speak, sir!" I exclaimed, seizing the hand of the incumbent in the wildness of my joy. "I am stupified by this intelligence! Trust me, sir—believe me, you shall find me not undeserving of your generosity and"—

"No, Stukely. Call it not by such a name. It is

any thing but that ; there is no liberality, no nobility of soul, in giving you what I may not now withhold. I cannot see her droop and die, and live myself to know that a word from me had saved her. I have given my consent to the prosecution of your attachment at the latest moment—not because I wished it, but to prevent a greater evil. I have told you the truth ! It was due to us both that you should hear it; for the future look upon me as your father, and I will endeavour to do you justice.”

There was a stop. I was so oppressed with a sense of happiness, that I could find no voice to speak my joy or tell my thanks. Mr Fairman paused, and then continued.

“ You will come to the parsonage to-morrow, and take part again in the instruction of the lads after their return. You will be received as my daughter’s suitor. Arrangements will be made for a provision for you. Mayhew and I have it in consideration now. When our plan is matured, it shall be communicated to you. There need be no haste. You are both young—too young for marriage—and we shall not yet fix the period of your espousal.”

My mind was overpowered with a host of dazzling visions, which rose spontaneously as the minister proceeded in his delightful talk. I soon lost all power of listening to details. The beloved Ellen, the faithful and confiding maiden, who had not deserted the wanderer although driven from her father’s doors—she,

the beautiful and priceless jewel of my heart, was present in every thought, and was the ornament and chief of every group that passed before my warm imagination. Whilst the incumbent continued to speak of the future, of his own sacrifice, and my great gain —whilst his words, without penetrating, touched my ears, and died away—my soul grew busy in the contemplation of the prize, which, now that it was mine, I scarce knew how to estimate. Where was she *then?* How had she been? To how many days of suffering and of trial may she have been doomed? How many pangs may have wrung that noble heart before its sad complaints were listened to, and mercifully answered? I craved to be at her side. The words which her father had spoken had loosened the heavy chain that tied me down—my limbs were conscious of their freedom—my spirit felt its liberty—what hindered instant flight? In the midst of my reverie Dr Mayhew entered the room—and I remember distinctly that my immediate impulse was to leave the two friends together, and to run as fast as love could urge and feet could carry me—to the favoured spot which held all that I cared for now on earth. The plans, however, of Doctor Mayhew interfered with this desire. He had done much for me, more than I knew, and he was not the man to go without his payment. A long evening was yet before us, time enough for a hundred jokes, which I must hear, and witness, and applaud, or I was most unworthy of the kindness he had shown me. The

business over for which Mr Fairman had come expressly, the promise given of an early visit to the parsonage on the following day, an affectionate parting at the garden gate, and the incumbent proceeded on his homeward road. The doctor and I returned together to the house in silence, and one of us in partial fear; for I could see the coming sarcasm in the questionable smile that played about his lips. Not a word was spoken when we resumed our seats. At last he rang the bell, and Williams answered it —

“ Book Mr Stukely by the London coach to-morrow, Williams,” said the master; “ *he positively must and will depart to-morrow.*”

The criminal reprieved—the child, hopeless and despairing at the suffering parent’s bed, and blessed at length with a firm promise of amendment and recovery, can tell the feelings that sustained my fluttering heart, beating more anxiously the nearer it approached its *home*. I woke that morning with the lark—yes, ere that joyous bird had spread its wing, and broke upon the day with its mad note—and I left the doctor’s house whilst all within were sleeping. There was no rest for me away from that abode, whose gates of adamant, with all their bars and fastenings, one magic word had opened—whose sentinels were withdrawn—whose terrors had departed. The hours were all too long until I claimed my new-found privilege. Morn of the mellow summer, how beautiful is thy birth! How soft—how calm—how breathlessly and blush-

ingly thou stealest upon a slumbering world; fearful, as it seems, of startling it. How deeply quiet, and how soothing, are thy earliest sounds—scarce audible—by no peculiar quality distinguishable, yet thrilling and intense! How doubly potent falls thy witching influence on him whose spirit passion has attuned to all the harmonies of earth, and made but too susceptible! Disturbed as I was by the anticipation of my joy, and by the consequent unrest, with the first sight of day, and all its charms, came *peace*—actual and profound. The agitation of my soul was overwhelmed by the prevailing stillness, and I grew tranquil and subdued. Love existed yet—what could extinguish that?—but heightened and sublimed. It was as though, in contemplating the palpable and lovely work of heaven, all selfishness had at once departed from my breast—all dross had separated from my best affections, and left them pure and free. And so I walked on, happiest of the happy, from field to field, from hill to hill, with no companion on the way, no traveller within my view—alone with nature and my heart's delight. “And men pent up in cities,” thought I, as I went along, “would call this—*Solitude*.” I remembered how lonely I had felt in the busy crowds of London—how chill, how desolate, and forlorn, and marvelled at the reasoning of man. And came no other thoughts of London, and the weary hours passed there, as I proceeded on my delightful walk? Yes, many, as Heaven knows, who

heard the involuntary matin prayer, offered in gratefulness of heart, upon my knees, and in the open fields, where no eye but one could look upon the worshipper, and call the fitness of the time and place in question. The early mowers were soon a-foot; they saluted me and passed. Then, from the humblest cottages issued the straight thin column of white smoke—white as the snowy cloud—telling of industry within, and the return of toil. Now labourers were busy in their garden plots, labouring for pleasure and delight, ere they strove abroad for hire, their children at their side, giving the utmost of their small help—young, ruddy, wild, and earnest workmen all! The country day is up some hours before the day in town. Life sleeps in cities, whilst it moves in active usefulness away from them. The hills were dotted with the forms of men before I reached the parsonage, and when I reached it, a golden lustre from the mounting sun lit up the lovely house with fire—streaming through the casements, already opened to the sweet and balmy air.

If I had found it difficult to rest on this eventful morning, so also had another—even here—in this most peaceful mansion. The parsonage gate was at this early hour unclosed. I entered. Upon the borders of the velvet lawn, bathed in the dews of night, I beheld the gentle lady of the place; she was alone, and walking pensively—now stooping, not to pluck, but to admire, and then to leave amongst its mates,

some crimson beauty of the earth—now looking to the mountains of rich gold piled in the heavens, one upon another, changing in form and colour, blending and separating, as is their wondrous power and custom, filling the maiden's soul with joy. Her back was towards me; should I advance, or now retire? Vain question, when, ere an answer could be given, I was already at the lady's side. Shall I tell of her virgin bashfulness, her blushes, her trembling consciousness of pure affection? Shall I say how little her tongue could speak her love, and how eloquently the dropping tear told all? Shall I describe our morning's walk, her downward gaze—my pride?—her deep, deep silence, my impassioned tones, the insensibility to all external things—the rushing on of envious Time, jealous of the perfect happiness of man? The heart is wanting for the task—the pen is shaking in the tremulous hand. Beautiful vision! long associate of my rest, sweetener of the daily cares of life, shade of the heavenly one—beloved Ellen! hover still around me, and sustain my aching soul—carry me back to the earliest days of our young love, quicken every moment with enthusiasm—be my fond companion once again, and light up the old man's latest hour with the fire that ceased to burn when thou fled'st heavenward! Thou hast been near me often since we parted here! Whose smile but thine has cheered the labouring pilgrim through the lagging day? In tribulation, whose voice has whispered *peace*—whose eye hath shone

upon him, like a star, tranquil and steady in the gloomy night? Linger yet, and strengthen and hallow the feeble words that chronicle our love!

It would be impossible to conceive a woman more eminently fitted to fulfill the duties of her station, than the gentle creature whose heart it had been my happiness and fortune to make my own. Who could speak so well of the *daughter's* obedience as he who was the object of her hourly solicitude? Who could behold her tenderness, her watchfulness and care, and not revere the filial piety that sanctified the maid? The poor, most difficult of mankind to please, the easily offended, the jealous and the peevish, were unanimous in their loud praise of her, whose presence filled the foulest hut with light, and was the harbinger of good. It is well to doubt the indigent when they speak *evil* of their fellows; but trust them when, with one voice, *they pray for blessings*, as they did for her, who came amongst them as a sister and a child. If a spotless mind be a treasure in the *wife*, if simplicity and truth, virtue and steadfast love, are to be prized in her who plights her troth to man, what had I more to ask—what had kind nature more to grant?

Had all my previous sufferings been multiplied a hundred times, I should have been indemnified in the month that followed my restoration to the parsonage. Evening after evening, when the business of the day was closed, did we together wander amongst the scenes that were so dear to us—too happy in the

enjoyment of the present, dwelling with pleasure on the past, dreaming wildly—as the young must dream—of the uncreated future. I spoke of earthly happiness, and believed it not a fable. What could be brighter than our promises? What looked more real—less likely to be broken? How sweet was our existence! My tongue would never cease to paint in dazzling colours the days that yet awaited us. I numbered over the joys of a domestic life, told her of the divine favour that accompanies contentment, and how angels of heaven hover over the house in which it dwells united to true love. Nor was there wanting extravagant and fanciful discourse, such as may be spoken by the prodigal heart to its co-mate, when none are by to smile and wonder at blind feeling.

“ Dear Ellen,” have I said, in all the fulness of my passion—“ what a life is this we lead! what heavenly joy! To be for ever only as we are, were to have more of God’s kindness and beloved care than most of earthly creatures may. Indissolubly joined, and in each other’s light to live, and in each other’s sight alone to seek those blessings wedded feelings may bestow—to perceive and know ourselves as one—to breathe as one the ripe delicious air—to fix on every object of our mutual love the stamp and essence of one living heart—to walk abroad, and find glad sympathy in all created things—this, this is to be conscious of more lasting joy—to have more comfort in the sight of God, than they did know, the happy

parent pair, when heaven smiled on earth, and earth was heaven, connected both by tenderest links of love."

She did not answer, when my soul ran riot in its bliss. She listened, and she sighed, as though experience cut off the promises of hope, or as if intimations of evil began already to cast their shadows, and to press upon her soul !

Time flew as in a dream. The sunny days passed on, finding and leaving me without a trouble or a fear—happy and entranced. Each hour discovered new charms in my betrothed, and every day unveiled a latent grace. How had I merited my great good fortune ? How could I render myself worthy of her love ? It was not long before the object of my thoughts, sleeping and waking, became a living idol, and I, a reckless worshipper.

Doctor Mayhew had been a faithful friend, and such he continued, looking to the interests of the friendless, which might have suffered in the absence of so good an advocate. It was he, as I learned, who had drawn from the incumbent his reluctant consent to my return. My departure following my thoughtless declaration so quickly, was not without visible effect on her who had such deep concern in it. Her trouble was not lost upon the experienced doctor ; he mentioned his suspicion to her father, and recommended my recall. The latter would not listen to his counsel, and pronounced his *diagnosis* hasty and

incorrect. The physician bade him wait. The patient did not rally, and her melancholy increased. The doctor once more interceded, but not successfully. Mr Fairman received his counsel with a hasty word, and Dr Mayhew left the parsonage in anger, telling the minister he would himself be answerable no longer for her safety. A week elapsed, and Dr Mayhew found it impossible to keep away. The old friends met, more attached than ever for the parting which both had found it difficult to bear. The lady was no better. They held a conference—it ended in my favour. I had been exactly a month reinstated, when Dr Mayhew, who could not rest thoroughly easy until our marriage was concluded, and, as he said, “the affair was off his hands,” took a convenient opportunity to intimate to Mr Fairman the many advantages of an early union. The minister was anxious to postpone the ceremony to a distant period, which he had not courage himself to name. This Mayhew saw, and was well satisfied that, if my happiness depended on the word of the incumbent, I should wait long before I heard it voluntarily given. He told me so, and undertook “to bring the matter to a head” with all convenient speed. He met with a hundred objections, for all of which he was prepared. He heard his friend attentively, and with great deference, and then he answered. What his answers were, I cannot tell—powerful his reasoning must have been, since it argued the jealous parent into the necessity of

arranging for an early marriage, and communicating with me that same day upon the views which he had for our future maintenance and comfort.

Nothing could exceed the gratification of Dr Mayhew, that best and most successful of ambassadors, when he ran to me—straight from the incumbent's study—to announce the perfect success of his diplomacy. Had he been negotiating for himself, he could not have been in higher spirits. Ellen was with me when he acquainted me, that in three months the treasure would be my own, and mine would be the privilege and right to cherish it. He insisted that he should be rewarded on the instant with a kiss; and, in the exuberance of his feelings, was immodest enough to add, that “if he wasn't godfather to the first, and if we did not call him Jacob after him, he'd give us over to our ingratitude, and not have another syllable to say to us.”

It was a curious occupation to contemplate the parent during the weeks that followed—to observe all-powerful nature working in him, the chastened and the upright minister of heaven, as she operates upon the weakest and the humblest of mankind. He lived for the happiness and prosperity of his child. For that he was prepared to make every sacrifice a father might—even the greatest—that of parting with her. Was it to be expected that he should be insensible to the heavy cost? Could it be supposed that he would all at once resign the dear one without a

quiver or a pang? There is a tremor of the soul as well as of the body, when the knife is falling on the limb to sever it, and this he suffered, struggling for composure as a martyr, and yet with all the weakness of a man. I have watched him closely, and I have known his heart wringing with pain, as the eye of his child sparkled with joy at my approach, whilst the visible features of his face strove fiercely to suppress the rising selfishness. He has gazed upon her, as we have sat together in the cheerful night, wondering, as it seemed, by what fascination the natural and deep-rooted love of years could be surpassed and superseded by the immature affection of a day—forgetful of her mother's love, that once preferred him to her sire. In our evening walks I have seen him in our track, following from afar, eager to overtake and join us, and yet resisting the strong impulse, and forbearing. He could not hide from me the glaring fact, that he was envious of my fortune, manifest as it was in every trifling act; nor was it, in truth, easier for him to conceal the strong determination which he had formed to act with honour and with justice. No angry or reproachful word escaped his lips; every favour that he could show me he gladly proffered; nay, many uncalled-for and unexpected, he insisted upon my receiving, apparently, or, as I guessed, because he wished to mortify his own poor heart, and to remove from me the smallest cause for murmuring or complaint. I endeavoured not to be unworthy of his

liberality and confidence; and the daughter, who perceived the conflict in his breast, redoubled her attention, and made more evident her unimpaired and childlike love.

It wanted but a month to the time fixed for our union, when Ellen reached her twentieth year. On that occasion, Dr Mayhew dined with us, and passed the evening at the parsonage. He was in high spirits; and the minister himself more gay than I had known him since our engagement. Ellen reflected her father's cheerfulness, and was busy in sustaining it. All went merry as a marriage-bell. Ellen sang her father's favourite airs—played the tunes that pleased him best, and acquired new energy and power as she proceeded. The parent looked upon her with just pride, and took occasion, when the music was at its loudest, to turn to Mayhew, and to speak of her.

“ How well she looks ! ” said he ; “ how beautiful she grows ! ”

“ Yes,” answered the physician ; “ I don’t wonder that she made young Stukely’s heart ache. What a figure the puss has got ! ”

“ And her health seems quite restored ! ”

“ Well, you are not surprised at that, I reckon. Rest assured, my friend, if we could only let young ladies have their way, our patients would diminish rapidly. Why, how she sings to-night ! I never knew her voice so good—did you ? ”

“ Oh, she is happy, Mayhew ; all her thoughts are

joyful ! Her heart is revelling. It was very sinful to be so anxious on her account."

" So I always told you ; but you wouldn't mind me. She'll make old bones."

" You think so, do you ? "

" Why, look at her yourself, and say whether we should be justified in thinking otherwise. Is she not the picture of health and animation ? "

" Yes, Mayhew, but her mother"—

" There, be quiet will you ? The song is over."

Ellen returned to her father's side, sat upon a stool before him, and placed her arms upon his knee. The incumbent drew her head there, and touched her cheek in playfulness.

" Come, my friend," exclaimed the physician, " that isn't allowable by any means. Recollect two young gentlemen are present, and we can't be tantalized."

The minister smiled, and Ellen looked at me.

" Do you remember, doctor," enquired the latter, " this very day eleven years, when you came over on the grey pony, that walked into this room after you, and frightened us all so ? "

" Yes, puss, I do very well ; and don't I recollect your tying my wig to the chair, and then calling me to the window, to see how I should look when I had left it behind me, you naughty little girl ! "

" That was very wrong, sir ; but you know you forgave me for it."

"No, I didn't. Come here, though, and I will now."

She left her stool, and ran laughing to him. The doctor professed to whisper in her ear, but kissed her cheek. He coughed and hemmed, and, with a serious air, asked me what I meant by grinning at him.

"Do you know, doctor," continued Ellen, "that this is my first birthday, since that one, which we have kept without an interruption. Either papa or you have been always called away before half the evening was over."

"Well, and very sorry you would be, I imagine, if both of us were called away *now*. It would be very distressing to you; wouldn't it?"

"It would hardly render her happy, Mayhew," said Mr Fairman, "to be deprived of her father's society on such an occasion."

"No, indeed, papa," said Ellen, earnestly; "and the good doctor does not think so either."

"Doesn't he, though, you wicked pussy? You would be very wretched, then, if we were obliged to go? No doubt of it, especially if we happened to leave that youngster there behind us."

"Ellen shall read to us, Mayhew," said the incumbent, turning from the subject. "You will find Milton on my table, Caleb."

As he spoke, Ellen imparted to her friend a

look of tenderest remonstrance, and the doctor said no more.

The incumbent, himself a fine reader, had taken great pains to teach his child the necessary and simple, but much neglected art of reading well. There was much grace and sweetness in her utterance, correct emphasis, and no effort. An hour passed delightfully with the minister's favourite and beloved author; now the maiden read, now he. He listened with greater pleasure to her voice than to his own or any other, but he watched the smallest diminution of its power—the faintest evidence of failing strength—and released her instantly, most anxious for her health and safety, then and always.

Then arose, as will arise from the contented bosom of domestic piety, grateful rejoicings—the incense of an altar glowing with love's own offerings! Past time was summoned up, weighed with the present, and, with all the mercies which accompanied it, was still found wanting in the perfect and unsullied happiness that existed now. “The love of heaven,” said the minister, “had never been so manifest and clear. His labours in the service of his people, his prayers on their behalf, were not unanswered. Improvement was taking place around him; even those who had given him cause for deepest sorrow, were already turning from the path of error into that of rectitude and truth. The worst characters in the village had

been checked by the example of their fellows, and by the voice of their own conscience, (he might have added, by the working of their minister's most affectionate zeal,) and his heart was joyful—how joyful he could not say—on their account. His family was blessed—(and he looked at Ellen with a moistened eye)—with health, and with the promise of its continuance. His best and oldest friend was at his side ; and he, who was dear to them all on her account whose life would soon be linked with his, was about to add to every other blessing, the advantages which must follow the possession of so good a son. What more could he require ? How much more was this than the most he could deserve ! ”

Doctor Mayhew, touched with the solemn feeling of the moment, became a serious man. He took the incumbent by the hand, and spoke.

“ Yes, Fairman, we have cause for gratitude. You and I have roughed it many years, and gently enough do we go down the hill. To behold the sufferings of other men, and to congratulate ourselves upon our exemption, is not the rational mode of receiving goodness from Almighty God—yet it is impossible for a human being to look about him, and to see family after family worn down by calamity, whilst he himself is free from any, and not have his heart yearning with thankfulness, knowing, as he must, how little he merits his condition. You and I are happy fellows, both of us : and all we have to do, is to think so, and

to prepare quietly to leave our places, whilst the young folks grow up to take them. As for the boy there, if he doesn't smooth your pillow, and lighten for you the weight of old age as it comes on, then am I much mistaken, and ready to regret the steps which I have taken to bring you all together."

There was little spoken after this. The hearts were full to the brink—to speak was to interfere with their consummate joy. The doctor was the only one who made the attempt, and he, after a very ineffectual endeavour to be jocose, held his peace. The Bible was produced. The servants of the house appeared. A chapter was read from it by the incumbent—a prayer was offered up, and then we separated.

I stole to Ellen as she was about to quit us for the night. "And you, dear Ellen," I whispered in her ear, "are you, too, happy?"

"Yes, *dearest*," she murmured with a gentle pressure, that passed like wildfire to my heart. "I fear *too* happy. Earth will not suffer it."

We parted, and in twelve hours those words were not without their meaning.

We met on the following morning at the usual breakfast hour. The moment that I entered the apartment, I perceived that Ellen was indisposed—that something had occurred, since the preceding night, to give her anxiety or pain. Her hand trembled slightly, and a degree of perturbation was apparent in her movements. My first impression was, that she

had received ill news, for there was nothing in her appearance to indicate the existence of bodily suffering. It soon occurred to me, however, that the unwonted recent excitement might account for all her symptoms—that they were, in fact, the natural consequence of that sudden abundance of joyous spirits which I had remarked in her during the early part of the evening. I satisfied myself with this belief, or strove to do so—the more easily, perhaps, because I saw her father indifferent to her state, if not altogether ignorant of it. He who was ever lying in wait—ever watching—ever ready to apprehend the smallest evidence of ill health, was, on this morning, as insensible to the alteration which had taken place in the darling object of his solicitude, as though he had no eyes to see, or object to behold; so easy is it for a too anxious diligence in a pursuit to overshoot and miss the point at which it aims. Could he, as we sat, have guessed the cause of all her grief—could some dark spirit, gloating on man's misery, have breathed one fearful word into his ear, bringing to life and light the melancholy tale of distant years—how would his nature have supported the announcement—how bore the?—but let me not anticipate. I say that I dismissed all thought of serious mischief, by attributing at once all signs of it to the undue excitement of the festive night. As the breakfast proceeded, I believed that her anxiety diminished, and with that passed away my fears.

At the end of the pleasure garden of the parsonage was a paddock, and immediately beyond this another field, leading to a small valley of great beauty. On one side of "*the Dell*," as it was called, was a summer-house, which the incumbent had erected for the sake of the noble prospect which the elevation commanded. To this retreat Ellen and I had frequently wandered with our books during the progress of our love. Here I had read to her of affection and constancy, consecrated by the immortal poet's song. Here we had passed delightful hours, bestowing on the future the same golden lustre that made so bright the present. In joy, I had called this summer-house "*the Lover's Bower*," and it was pleasing to us both to think that we should visit in our after days, for many a year, and with increasing love, a spot endeared to us by the fondest recollections. Thither I bent my steps at the close of our repast. It wanted but two days to the time fixed for the resumption of our studies. The boys had returned, and the note of preparation was already sounded. I carried my task to the retreat, and there commenced my labours. An hour fled quickly whilst I was occupied somewhat in Greek, but more in contemplation of the gorgeous scene before me, and in lingering thoughts of her whose form was never absent, but hovered still about the pleasure or the business of the day. The shadow of that form was yet present, when the substance became visible to the bodily eye. Ellen followed me

to the “*Lover’s Bower*,” and there surprised me. She was even paler than before—and the burden of some disquietude was written on her gentle brow; but a smile was on her lips—one of a languid cast—and also of encouragement and hope. I drew her to my side. Lovers are egotists; their words point ever to themselves. She spoke of the birthday that had just gone by; the tranquil and blissful celebration of it. My expectant soul was already dreaming of the next that was to come, and speaking of the increased happiness that must accompany it.

Ellen sighed.

“It is a lover’s sigh!” thought I, not heeding it.

“Whatever may be the future, Caleb,” said Ellen seriously, but very calmly, “we ought to be prepared for it. Earth is not our *resting-place*. We should never forget that. Should we, dearest?”

“No, love; but earth has happiness of her kind, of which her children are most sensible. Whilst we are here, we live upon her promises.”

“But oh, not to the exclusion of the brighter promises that come from Heaven! You do not say that, dear Caleb?”

“No, Ellen. You could not give your heart to him who thought so; howbeit, you have bestowed it upon one unworthy of your piety and excellence.”

“Do not mock me, Caleb,” said Ellen blushing. “I have the heart of a sinner that needs all the mercy

of Heaven for its weaknesses and faults. I have ever fallen short of my duty."

" You are the only one who says it. Your father will not say so, and I question if the villagers would take your part in this respect."

" Do not misunderstand me, Caleb. I am not, I trust, a hypocrite. I have endeavoured to be useful to the poor and helpless in our neighbourhood—I have been anxious to lighten the heaviness of a parent's days, and, as far as I could, to indemnify him for my mother's loss. I believe that I have done the utmost my imperfect faculties permitted. I have nothing to charge myself with on these accounts. But my heavenly Father," continued the maiden, her cheeks flushing, her eyes filling with tears—" oh ! I have been backward in my affection and duty to him. I have not ever had before my eyes his honour and glory in my daily walk—I have not done every act in subordination to his will, for his sake, and with a view to his blessing. But He is merciful as well as just, and if his punishment falls now upon my head, it is assuredly to wean me from my error, and to bring me to himself."

The maid covered her moistened cheek, and sobbed loudly. I was fully convinced that she was suffering from the reaction consequent upon extreme joy. I was rather relieved than distressed by her burst of feeling, and I did not attempt for a time to check her tears.

“ Tell me, dear Caleb,” she said herself at length, “ if I were to lose you—if it were to please Heaven to take you suddenly from this earth, would it not be sinful to murmur at his act? Would it not be my duty to bend to his decree, and to prepare to follow you ?”

“ You would submit to such a trial as a Christian woman ought. I am sure you would, dear Ellen—parted, as we should be, but for a season, and sure of a reunion.”

“ And would you do this ?” enquired the maiden quickly. “ Oh, say that you would, dear Caleb ! Let me hear it.”

“ You are agitated, dearest. We will not talk of this now. There is grace in heaven appointed for the bitterest seasons of adversity. It does not fail when needed. Let us pray that the hour may be distant which shall bring home to either so great a test of resignation.”

“ Yes, pray, dear Stukely ; but should it come suddenly and quickly—oh, let us be prepared to meet it !”

“ We will endeavour, then ; and now to a more cheerful theme. Do we go to Dr Mayhew’s, as proposed ? We shall spend a happy day with our facetious, but most kind-hearted friend.”

Ellen burst again into a flood of tears.

“ What is the matter, love ?” I exclaimed. “ Confide in me, and tell the grief that preys upon your mind.”

"Do not be alarmed, Stukely," she answered rapidly; "it may be nothing after all; but when I woke this morning—it may, I hope for your sake that it *is* nothing serious—but my dear mother, it was the commencement of her own last fatal illness."

She stopped suddenly, as if her speech had failed her—coughed sharply, and raised her handkerchief to her mouth. I perceived a thick, broad spot of BLOOD, and shuddered.

"Do not be frightened, Stukely," she continued, shocked fearfully herself. "I shall recover soon. It is the suddenness—I was unprepared. So it was when I awoke this morning—and it startled me, because I heard it was the first bad symptom that my poor mother showed. Now, I pray you, Stukely, to be calm. Perhaps I shall get well; but if I do not, I shall be so happy—preparing for eternity, with you, dear Caleb, at my side. You promised to be tranquil, and to bear up against this day; and I am sure you will—yes, for my sake—that I may see you so, and have no sorrow."

I took the dear one to my bosom, and, like a child, cried upon her neck. What could I say? In one moment I was a bankrupt and a beggar—my fortunes were scattered to the winds—my solid edifice was stricken by the thunderbolt, and lay in ruins before me! Was it real?

Ellen grew calmer as she looked at me, and spoke.

"Listen to me, dearest Stukely. It was my

duty to acquaint you with this circumstance, and I have done so, relying on your manliness and love. You have already guessed what I am about to add. My poor father"—her lips quivered as she said the word—"he must know nothing for the present. It would be cruel unnecessarily to alarm him. His heart would break. He MUST be kept in ignorance of this. You shall see Mayhew; he will, I trust, remove our fears. Should he confirm them, he can communicate to papa." Again she paused, and her tears trickled to her lips, which moved convulsively.

"Do not speak, my beloved," I exclaimed. "Compose yourself. We will return home. Be it as you wish. I will see Mayhew immediately, and bring him with me to the parsonage. Seek rest—avoid exertion."

I know not what conversation followed this. I know not how we reached our home again. I have no recollection of it. Three times upon our road was the cough repeated, and, as at first, it was accompanied by that hideous sight. In vain she turned her head away to escape detection. It was impossible to deceive my keen and piercing gaze. I grew pale as death as I beheld on each occasion the frightful evidence of disease; but the maiden pressed my hand, and smiled sweetly and encouragingly to drive away my fears. She did not speak—I had forbidden her to do so; but her looks—full of tenderness and love—told how all her thoughts were for her lover—all her anxiety and care.

At my request, as soon as we arrived at home, she went to bed. I saw the incumbent—acquainted him with her sudden illness—taking care to keep its nature secret—and then ran for my life to Dr Mayhew's residence. The very appearance of blood was to me, as it is always to the common and uninformed observer, beyond all doubt confirmatory of the worst suspicions—the harbinger of certain death. There is something horrible in its sight, presented in such a form; but not for itself do we shrink as we behold it—not for what it is, but for what it awfully proclaims. I was frantic and breathless when I approached the doctor's house, and half stupified when I at length stood before him.

I told my errand quickly.

The doctor attempted instantly to mislead me, but he failed in his design. I saw, in spite of the forced smile that would not rest upon his lips, how unexpectedly and powerfully this news had come upon him—how seriously he viewed it. He could not remove my miserable convictions by his own abortive efforts at cheerfulness and unconcern. He moved to his window, and strove to whistle, and to speak of the haymakers who were busy in the fields, and of the weather; but the more he feigned to regard my information as undeserving of alarm, the more convinced I grew that deadly mischief had already taken place. There was an air about him that showed him ill at ease; and, in the midst of all his quietude and indiffer-

ence, he betrayed an anxiety to appear composed, unwarranted by an ordinary event. Had the illness been trifling, indeed, he could have afforded to be more serious and heedful.

"I will be at the parsonage some time to-day. You can return without me, Stukely."

"Dr Mayhew," I exclaimed, "I entreat, I implore you not to trifle with me! I can bear any thing but that. Tell me the worst, and I will not shrink from it. You must not think to deceive me. You are satisfied that there is no hope for us; I am sure you are, and you will not be just and say so."

"I am satisfied of no such thing," answered the doctor quickly. "I should be a fool, a madman, to speak so rashly. There is every reason to hope, I do believe, at present. Tell me one thing—does her father know of it?"

"He does not."

"Then let it still be kept a secret from him. Her very life may depend upon his ignorance. She must be kept perfectly composed—no agitation—no frightened faces around her. But I will go with you, and see what can be done. I'll warrant it is nothing at all, and that puss is well over her fright before we get to her."

Again the doctor smiled unhealthfully, and tried, awkwardly enough, to appear wholly free from apprehension, whilst he was most uncomfortable with the amount of it.

The physician remained for half an hour with his patient, and rejoined me in the garden when he quitted her. He looked serious and thoughtful.

"There is no hope, then?" I exclaimed immediately.

"Tush, boy!" he answered; "quiet—quiet. She will do well, I hope—eventually. She has fever on her now, which must be brought down. While that remains there will be anxiety, as there must be always—when it leaves her, I trust she will be well again. Do you know if she has undergone any unusual physical exertion?"

"I do not."

"I confess to you that I do not like this accident; but it is impossible to speak positively now. Whilst the fever lasts, symptoms may be confounded and mistaken, I will watch her closely."

"Have you seen her father?"

"I have; but I have told him nothing further than he knew. He believes her slightly indisposed. I have calmed him, and have told him not to have the child disturbed. You will see to that?"

"I will."

"And now mark me, Stukely. I expect that you will behave like a man, and as you ought. We cannot keep Fairman ignorant of this business. Should it go on, as it may—in spite of every thing we can do—he must know it. You have seen sufficient of his character to judge how he will receive the information which it may be my painful lot to take to him. I think

of it with dread. It has been my pleasure to stand your friend—you must prove mine. I shall expect you to act with fortitude and calmness, and not, by weakness and self-indulgence, to increase the pain that will afflict the parent's heart; for it will be sufficient for Fairman to know only what has happened, to give up every hope and consolation. You must be firm on his account, and chiefly for the sake of the dear girl, who should not see your face without a smile of confidence and love upon it. Do you hear me? I will let you weep now," he continued, noticing the tears which prevented my reply, "provided that you dry your eyes, and keep them so from this time forward. Do you hear me?"

"Yes," I faltered.

"And will you heed me?"

"I will try," I answered, as firmly as I might, with every hope within me crushed and killed by the words which he had spoken.

"Very well. Then let us say no more, until we see what Providence is doing for us."

The fever of Ellen did not abate that day. The doctor did not leave the house, but remained with the incumbent—not, as he told his friend, because he thought it necessary so to do, but to keep the word which he had given the night before—viz. to pass the day with him. He was sorry that he had been deprived of their company at his own abode, but he could make himself quite comfortable where he was. About eleven

o'clock at night, the doctor thought it strange that Robin had not brought his pony over, and wondered what had happened.

"Shall we send to enquire?" asked Mr Fairman.

"Oh no!" was the quick answer, "that never can be worth while. We'll wait a little longer."

At twelve the doctor spoke again. "Well, he must think of moving; but he was very tired, and did not care to walk."

"Why not stay here, then? I cannot see, Mayhew, why you should be so uneasy at the thought of sleeping out. Come, take your bed with us for once."

"Eh?—well—it's very late—suppose I do."

Mayhew had not been shrewd enough, and, with his ready acquiescence, the minister learned all.

I did not go to bed. My place was at her door, and there I lingered till the morning. The physician had paid his last visit shortly after midnight, and had given orders to the nurse who waited on the patient, to call him up if necessary, but on no account to disturb the lady if she slept or was composed. The gentle sufferer did not require his services, or, if she did, was too thoughtful and too kind to make it known. Early in the morning Doctor Mayhew came—the fever had increased—and she had experienced a new attack of haemoptysis the moment she awoke. The doctor stepped softly from her room, and deep anxiety was written on his brow. I followed him with eagerness. He put his finger to his lips, and said—"Remember, Stukely!"

“ Yes, I will—I do ; but is she better ?”

“ No—but I am not discouraged yet. Every thing depends upon extreme tranquillity. No one must see her. Dear me—dear me ! what is to be said to Fairman, should he ask ?”

“ Is she placid ?” I enquired.

“ She is an angel, Stukely,” said the good doctor, pressing my hands, and passing on. When we met at breakfast, the incumbent looked hard at me, and seemed to gather something from my pale and care-worn face. When Mayhew came, full of bustle, assumed, and badly too, as the shallowest observer could perceive, he turned to him, and in a quiet voice asked—“ If his child was much worse since the previous night.”

“ Not much,” said Mayhew. “ She will be better in a short time, I trust.”

“ May I see her ?” enquired the father in the same soft tone.

“ Not now—by and by, perhaps : I hope to-morrow. This is a sudden attack, you see—any excitement may prolong it : it wouldn’t be well to give a chance away. Don’t you see that, Fairman ?”

“ Yes,” said the minister, and from that moment made no further mention of his daughter during breakfast. The meal was soon dispatched. Mr Fairman retired to his study—and the doctor prepared for his departure. He promised to return in the afternoon.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed as he took leave of me at the gate, "that Fairman remains so very unsuspecting. This is not like him. I expected to find him more inquisitive."

"I am surprised," I answered; "but it is most desirable that he should continue so."

"Yes—yes—by all means—for the present at all events."

Throughout the day there was no improvement in the patient's symptoms. The physician came according to his promise, and again at night. He slept at the parsonage for the second time. The minister betrayed no wonder at this unusual act, showed no agitation, made no importunate enquiries. He asked frequently during the day if any amendment had taken place; but always in a gentle voice, and without any other reference to her illness. As often as the doctor came he repeated his wish to visit his dear child; but receiving for answer, "that he had better not at present," he retired to his study with a tremulous sigh, but offering no remonstrance.

The doctor went early to rest. He had no inclination to spend the evening with his friend, whom he hardly cared to see until he could meet him as the messenger of good tidings. I had resolved to hover, as I did before, near the mournful chamber in which she lay; and there I kept a weary watch until my eyes refused to serve me longer, and I was forced against my will, and for the sake of others, to yield

my place and crawl to my repose. As I walked stealthily through the house, and on tiptoe, fearful of disturbing one beloved inmate even by a breath—I passed the incumbent's study. The door was open, and a glare of light broke from it, and stretched across the passage. I hesitated for a moment—then listened, but hearing nothing, pursued my way. It was very strange. The clock had just before struck three, and the minister, it was supposed, had been in bed since midnight. "His lamp is burning," thought I—"he has forgotten it. I was on the point of entering the apartment—when I was deterred and startled by his voice. My hand was already on the door, and I looked in. Before me, on his knees, with his back towards me, was my revered friend — his hands clasped, and his head raised in supplication. He was in his dress of the day, and had evidently not yet visited his pillow. I waited, and he spoke—

"Not my will," he exclaimed in a piercing tone of prayer—"not mine, but thy kind will be done, O Lord! If it be possible, let the bitter cup pass from me; but spare not, if thy glory must needs be vindicated. Bring me to thy feet in meek, and humble, and believing confidence—all is well, then, for time and for eternity. It is merciful and good to remove the idol that stands between our love and God. Father of mercy, enable me to bring the truth *home*, *home* to this most traitorous, this lukewarm, earthy heart of mine—a heart not worthy of thy care and help.

Let me not murmur at thy gracious will—oh ! rather bend and bow to it—and kiss the rod that punishes. I need chastisement; for I have loved too well—too fondly. I am a rebel, and thy all-searching eye hath found me faithless in thy service. Take her, Father and Saviour. I will resign her—I will bless the hand that smites me—I will"—he stopped; and big tears, such as drop fearfully from manhood's eye, made known to Heaven the agony that tears a parent's heart, whilst piety is occupied in healing it.

It is not my purpose to recite the doubts and fears, the terrible suspense, the anxious hopes, that filled the hours which passed whilst the condition of the patient remained critical. It is a recital which the reader may well spare, and I avoid most gladly. At the end of a week, the fever departed from the sufferer. The alarming symptoms disappeared, and confidence flowed rapidly to the soul again. At this time the father paid his first visit to his child. He found her weak and wasted; the violent applications which had been necessary for her safety, had robbed her of all strength—had effected, in fact, a prostration of power, which she never recovered, from which she never rallied. Mr Fairman was greatly shocked, and asked the physician for his opinion *now*. The latter declined giving it until, as he expressed himself, "the effects of the fever, and her attack, had left him a fair and open field for observation. There was a slight cough upon her. It was impossible for the present to say,

whether it was temporary and dependent upon what had happened, or whether it resulted from actual mischief in her lung."

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A month has passed away since the physician spoke these words, and to doubt longer would be to gaze upon the sun and to question its brightness. Mayhew has told the father his worst fears, and bids him prepare like a Christian and a man for the loss of his earthly treasure. It was he who watched the decay of her mother. The case is a similar one. He has no consolation to offer. It must be sought at the throne of Him who giveth, and hath the right to take away. The minister receives the intelligence with admirable fortitude. We are sitting together, and the doctor has just spoken as becomes him, seriously and well. There is a spasm on the cheek of the incumbent, whilst I sob loudly. The latter takes me by the hand, and speaks to the physician in a low and hesitating tone.

"Mayhew," said he, "I thank you for this sincerity. I will endeavour to look the terror in the face, as I have struggled to do for many days. It is hard—but through the mercy of Christ it is not impracticable. Dear and oldest friend, unite your prayers with mine, for strength, and holiness, and resignation. Cloud and agitation are at our feet. Heaven is above us. Let us look there, and all is well."

We knelt. The minister prayed. He did not ask

his Master to suspend his judgments. He implored him to prepare the soul of the afflicted one for its early flight, and to subdue the hearts of them all with his grace and holy spirit. Let him who doubts the efficacy of *prayer* seek to clear his difficulty in the season of affliction, or when death sits grimly at the hearth—he shall be satisfied.

If it were a consolation and a joy in the midst of our tribulation to behold the father chastened by the heavy blow which had fallen so suddenly upon his age, how shall I express the ineffable delight—yes, delight, amidst sorrow the most severe—with which I contemplated the beloved maiden, upon whose tender years Providence had allowed to fall so great a trial. Fully sensible of her position, and of the near approach of death, she was, so long as she could see her parent and her lover without distress, patient, cheerful, and rejoicing. Yes, weaker and weaker as she grew, happier and happier she became in the consciousness of her pure soul's increase. Into her ear had been whispered, and before her eyes holy spirits had appeared with the mysterious communication, which, hidden as it is from us, we find animating and sustaining feeble nature, which else would sink, appalled and overwhelmed. There was not one of us who did not live a witness to the truth of the heavenly promise, “*as thy days, so shall thy strength be;*” not one amongst the dearest friends of the sufferer, who did not feel, in the height of his affliction, that God would

not cast upon his creatures a burden which a Christian might not bear. But to *her* especially came the celestial declaration with power and might. An angel, sojourning for a day upon the earth, and preparing for his homeward flight, could not have spread his ready wing more joyfully, with livelier anticipation of his native bliss, than did the maiden look for her recall and blessed ascension to the skies. In her presence I had seldom any grief; it was swallowed up and lost in gratitude for the victory which the dear one had achieved, in virtue of her faith, over all the horrors of her situation. It was when alone that I saw, in its reality and naked wretchedness, the visitation that I, more than any other, was doomed to suffer. For days I could scarcely bring myself to the calm consideration of it. It seemed unreal, impossible, a dream—any thing but what it was—the direst of worldly woes—the most tremendous of human punishments.

I remember vividly a day passed in the chamber of the resigned creature, about two months after the first indication of her illness. Her disease had increased rapidly, and the signs of its ravages were painfully manifest in her sunken eye, her hectic cheek, her hollow voice, her continual cough. Her spirit became more tranquil as her body retreated from the world—her hopes more firm, her belief in the love of her Saviour—his will and power to save her, more clear, and free from all perplexity. I had never beheld so beautiful a sight as the devoted maid presented to my

view. I had never supposed it possible to exist; and thus, as I sat at her side, though the thought of death was ever present, it was as of a terror in a milkwhite shroud—a monster enveloped and concealed beneath a robe of beauty. I listened to her with enchantment whilst she spoke of the littleness of this world, and the boundless happiness that awaited true believers in the next—of the unutterable mercy of God, in removing us from a scene of trouble whilst our views were cloudless, and our hopes sure and abiding. Yes, charmed by the unruffled air, the angelic look, I could forget even my mortality for a moment, and feel my living soul in deep communion with a superior and brighter spirit. It was when she recalled me to earth by a reminiscence of our first days of love, that the bruised heart was made sensible of pain, and of its lonely widowed lot. Then the tears would not be checked, but rushed passionately forth, and, as the clouds shut out and hid the one brief glimpse of heaven, flowed unrestrained.

Her mind was in a sweet composed state during the interview to which I allude. She had pleasure in referring to the days of her childhood, and in speaking of the happiness which she had found amongst her native hills.

“ How little, Caleb,” she said, “ is the mind occupied with thoughts of death in childhood—with any thoughts of actual lasting evil! We cannot see these things in childhood—we cannot penetrate so deeply, or throw

our gaze so far, we are so occupied with the joys that are round about us. Is it not so? Our parents are ever with us. Day succeeds to day—one so like the other—and our home becomes our world. A sorrow comes at length—a parent dies—the first and dearest object in that world; then all is known, and the stability of life becomes suspected."

"The home of many," I replied, "is undisturbed for years."

"Yes, and how sweet a thing is love of home! It is not acquired, I am sure. It is a feeling that has its origin elsewhere. It is born with us; brought from another world, to carry us on in this with joy. It attaches to the humblest heart that ever throbbed."

"Dear Ellen!" I exclaimed, "how little has sorrow to do with your affliction?"

"And why, dear Caleb? Have you never found that the difficulties of the broad day melt away beneath the influences of the quiet lovely night? Have you never been perplexed in the bustle and tumult of the day, and has not truth revealed itself when all was dark and still? This is my night, and in sickness I have seen the eye of God upon me, and heard his words, as I have never seen and heard before?"

It was in this manner that she would talk, not more disturbed, nay, not so much, as when in happier times I have heard her speak of the troubles and anxieties of her poor villagers. No complaint—no mournful accents escaped her lips. If at times the soaring

spirit was repressed, dejected, the living—the loved ones whom she must leave behind her, had possession of her thoughts, and loaded them with pain. Who would wait upon her father? Who would attend to all his little wants? Who could understand his nature as she had learned it—and who would live to comfort and to cheer his days? These questions she has asked herself, whilst her only answers have been her struggling tears.

The days were travelling fast; each one taking from the doomed girl years of life. She dwindled and wasted; and became at length less than a shadow of her former self. Why linger on the narrative? Autumn arrived, and, with the general decay—she died. A few hours before her death she summoned me to her bedside, and acquainted me with her fast approaching dissolution. “It is the day,” she said, speaking with difficulty—“I am sure of it. I have watched that branch for many days—look—it is quite bare. Its last yellow leaf has fallen—I shall not survive it.” I gazed upon her; her eye was brighter than ever. It sparkled again, and most beautiful she looked. But death was there—and her soul eager to give him all that he could claim!

“You are quite happy, dearest Ellen!” I exclaimed, weeping on her thin emaciated hand.

“Most happy, beloved. Do not grieve—be resigned—be joyful. I have a word to say. Nurse,” she continued, calling to her attendant—“the drawing.”

The nurse placed in her hand the sketch which she had taken of my favourite scene.

"Do you remember, love?" said she. "Keep it, for Ellen—you loved that spot—oh, so did I!—and you will love it still. There is another sketch, you will find it by and by—afterwards—when I am—It is in my desk. Keep that too, for Ellen, will you? It is the last drawing I have made."

I sat by and bit my lips to crush my grief; but I could not be silent whilst my heart was breaking.

"You should rejoice, dear," continued Ellen solemnly. "We did not expect this separation so very soon; but it is better now than later. Be sure it is merciful and good. Prepare for this hour, Caleb; and when it comes, you will be so calm, so ready to depart. How short is life! Do not waste the precious hours. Read from St John, dearest—the eleventh chapter. It is all sweetness and consolation."

The sun was dropping slowly into the west, leaving behind him a deep red glow that illuminated the hills, and burnished the windows of the sick-chamber. The wind moaned, and, sweeping the sere leaves at intervals, threatened a tempest. There was a solemn stillness in the parsonage, around whose gate—weeping in silence, without heart to speak, or wish to make their sorrow known—were collected a host of humble creatures—the poorest but sincerest friends of Ellen—the villagers who had been her care. They waited and lingered for the heavy news, which they were told

must come to them this day ; and prayed secretly—every one of them, old and young—for mercy on the sufferer's soul ! And she, whose gentle spirit is about to fit, lies peacefully, and but half-conscious of the sounds that pass to Heaven on her behalf. Her father, Mayhew, and I, kneel round her bed, and the minister in supplicating tones, where nature does not interpose, dedicates the virgin to *His* favour whose love she has applied so well. He ceases, for a whisper has escaped her lips. We listen all. “*Oh, this is peace !*” she utters faintly, but most audibly, and the scene is over.

“ It is a dream,” said the minister, when we parted for the night—I with the vain hope to forget in sleep the circumstances of the day—the father to stray unwittingly into *her* former room, and amongst the hundred objects connected with the happy memory of the departed.

The picture of which my Ellen had spoken, I obtained on the following day. It was a drawing of the church and the burial-ground adjoining it. One grave was open. It represented that in which her own mortal remains were deposited, amidst the unavailing lamentations of a mourning village.

In three months the incumbent quitted Devonshire. The scenery had no pleasure for him, associated as it was with all the sorrows of his life. His pupils returned to their homes. He had offered to retain them, and to keep his incumbency for the sake of my advancement ; but, whilst I saw that every hour spent

in the village brought with it new bitterness and grief, I was not willing to call upon him for so great a sacrifice. Such a step, indeed, was rendered unnecessary through the kind help of Dr Mayhew, to whom I owe my present situation, which I have held for forty years with pleasure and contentment. Mr Fairman retired to a distant part of the kingdom, where the condition of the people rendered the presence of an active minister of God a privilege and a blessing. In the service of his Master, in the securing of the happiness of other men, he strove for years to deaden the pain of his own crushed heart. And he succeeded—living to bless the wisdom which had carried him through temptation; and dying, at last, to meet with the reward conferred upon the man *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seeks for glory, and honour, and immortality*—ETERNAL LIFE.

The employment obtained for me by the kind interest of Dr Mayhew, which the return of so many summers and winters has found me steadily prosecuting, was in the house of his brother—a gentleman whose name is amongst the first in a profession adorned by a greater number of high-minded, honourable men, than the world generally is willing to allow. Glad to avail myself of comparative repose, an active occupation, and a certain livelihood, I did not hesitate to enter his office in the humble capacity of clerk. I have lived to become the confidential secretary and faithful friend of my respected principal.

As I have progressed noiselessly in the world, and rather as a spectator than an actor on the broad stage of life, it has been no unprofitable task to trace the career of those with whom I formed an intimacy during the bustle and excitement of my boyhood. Not many months after my introduction into the mysteries of law, tidings reached my ears concerning Mr Clayton. He had left his chapel suddenly. His avarice had led him deeper and deeper into guilt; speculation followed speculation, until he found himself entangled in difficulties, from which, by lawful means, he was unable to extricate himself. He forged the signature of a wealthy member of his congregation, and thus added another knot to the complicated string of his delinquencies. He was discovered. There was not a man aware of the circumstances of the case who was not satisfied of his guilt; but a legal quibble saved him, and he was sent into the world again, branded with the solemn reprimand of the judge who tried him for his life, and who bade him seek existence honestly—compelled to labour, as he would be, in a humbler sphere of life than that in which he had hitherto employed his undoubted talents. To those acquainted with the working of the unhappy system of *dissent*, it will not be a matter of surprise that the result was not such as the good judge anticipated. It so happened that, at the time of Mr Clayton's acquittal, a dispute arose between the minister of his former congregation and certain influential members

of the same. The latter, headed by a fruiterer, a very turbulent and conceited personage, separated from what they called the *church*, and set up another *church* in opposition. The meeting-house was built, and the only question that remained to agitate the pious minds of the half-dozen founders was—*how to let the pews!* MR CLAYTON, more popular amongst his set than ever, was invited to accept the duties of a pastor. He consented, and had the pews been trebled they would not have satisfied one half the applications which, in one month, were showered on the victorious schismatics. Here, for a few years, Mr Clayton continued; his character improved, his fame more triumphant, his godliness more spiritual and pure than it had been even before he committed the crime of forgery. His ruling passion, notwithstanding, kept firm hold of his soul, and very soon betrayed him into the commission of new offences. He fled from London, and I lost sight of him. At length I discovered that he was preaching in one of the northern counties, and with greater success than ever—yes, such is the fallacy of the system—with the approbation of men, and the idolatry of women, to whom the history of his career was as familiar as their own. Again circumstances compelled him to decamp. I know not what these were, nor could I ever learn; satisfied, however, that from his nature *money* must have been in close connexion with them, I expected soon to hear of him again; and I did hear, but not for years. The infor-

mation that last of all I gained was, that he had sold his noble faculties *undisguisedly* to the arch enemy of man. He had become the editor of one of the lowest newspapers of the metropolis, notorious for its Radical polities and atheistical blasphemies.

Honest, faithful, and unimpeachable John Thompson ! Friend, husband, father—sound in every relation of this life—thou noble-hearted Englishman ! Let me not say thy race is yet extinct. No; in spite of the change that has come over the spirit of our land—in spite of the rust that eats into men's souls, eternally racked with thoughts of gain and traffic—in spite of the cursed poison insidiously dropped beneath the cottage eaves, by reckless, needy demagogues, I trust my native land, and still believe, that on her lap she cherishes whole bands of faithful children, and firm patriots. Not amongst the least inducements to return to London was the advantage of a residence near to that of my best friend and truest counsellor. I cannot number the days which I have spent with him and his unequalled family—unequalled in their unanimity and love. For years no Sunday passed which did not find me at their hospitable board; a companion afterwards in their country walks, and at the evening service of their parish church. The children were men and women before it pleased Providence to remove their sire. How like his life was good John Thompson's death ! Full of years, but with his mental vision clear as in its dawn, aware of his decline, he

called his family about his bed, and to the weeping group spoke firmly and most cheerfully.

"He had lived his time," he said, "and long enough to see his children doing well. There was not one who caused him pain and fear—and that was more than every father of a family could say—thank God for it! He didn't know that he had much to ask of any one of them. If they continued to work hard, he left enough behind to buy them tools; and if they didn't, the little money he had saved would be of very little use. There was their mother. He needn't tell 'em to be kind to her, because their feelings wouldn't let them do no otherwise. As for advice, he'd give it to them in his own plain way. First and foremost, he hoped *they never would sew their mouths up*—never act in such a way as to make themselves ashamed of speaking like a man;" and then he recommended strongly that *they should touch no bills but such as they might cut wood with*. The worse that could befall 'em would be a cut upon the finger; and if they handled other bills they'd cut their heads off in the end, be sure of it. "Alec," said he at last—"you fetch me a bundle of good sticks. Get them from the workshop." Alec brought them, and the sire continued—"Now, just break one a-piece. There, that's right—now, try and break them altogether. No, no, my boys, you can't do that, nor can the world break you so long as you hold fast and well together. Disagree and separate, and nothing is more easy. If a year

goes bad with one, let the others see to make it up. Live united, do your duty, and leave the rest to Heaven." So Thompson spake; such was the legacy he left to those who knew from his good precept and example how to profit by it. My friendship with his children has grown and ripened. They are thriving men. Alec has inherited the nature of his father more than any other son. All go smoothly on in life, paying little regard to the broils and contests of external life, but most attentive to the *in-door* business. All, did I say?—I err. Exception must be made in favour of my excellent good friend, Mr Robert Thompson. He has in him something of the spirit of his mother, and finds fault where his brethren are most docile. Catholic emancipation he regarded with horror—the Reform bill with indignation; and the onward movement of the present day he looks at with the feelings of an individual waiting for an earthquake. He is sure that the world is going round the other way, or is turned topsy-turvy, or is coming to an end. He is the quietest and best-disposed man in his parish—his moral character is without a flaw—his honesty without a blemish; yet is his mind filled with designs which would astonish the strongest head that rebel ever wore. He talks calmly of the propriety of hanging, without trial, all publishers of immorality and sedition—of putting embryo rioters to death, and granting them a judicial examination as soon as possible afterwards. Dissenting meeting-

houses he would shut up instanter, and guard with soldiers to prevent irregularity or disobedience. "Things," he says, "are twisted since his father was a boy, and must be twisted back—by force—to their right place again. Ordinary measures are less than useless for extraordinary times, and he only wishes he had power, or was prime minister for a day or two. But for this unfortunate *monomania*, the Queen has not a better subject, London has not a worthier citizen than the plain-spoken, simple-hearted Robert Thompson.

In one of the most fashionable streets of London, and within a few doors of the residence of royalty, is a stylish house, which always looks as if it were newly painted, furnished, and decorated. The very imperfect knowledge which a passer-by may gain, denotes the existence of great wealth within the clean and shining walls. Nine times out of ten shall you behold standing at the door, a splendid equipage—a britzka or barouche. The appointments are of the richest kind—the servants' livery gaudiest of the gaudy—silvery are their buttons, and silver-gilt the horses' harness. Stay, whilst the big door opens, and then mark the owner of the house and britzka. A distinguished foreigner, you say, of forty or thereabouts. He seems dressed in livery himself; for all the colours of the rainbow are upon him. Gold chains across his breast—how many you cannot count at once—intersect each other curiously; and on every finger sparkles

a precious jewel, or a host of jewels. Thick mustaches and a thicker beard adorn the foreign face; but a certain air which it assumes, convinces you without delay that it is the property of an unmitigated black-guard. Reader, you see the ready Ikey, whom we have met oftener than once in this short history. Would you know more? Be satisfied to learn, that he exists upon the follies and the vices of our high nobility. He has made good the promises of his childhood and his youth. He rolls in riches, and is —a fashionable money-lender.

Dark were the shadows which fell upon my youth. The indulgent reader has not failed to note them—with pain it may be—and yet, I trust, not without improvement. Yes, sad and gloomy has been the picture, and light has gleamed but feebly there. It has been otherwise since I carried, for my comfort and support, the memory of my beloved Ellen into the serious employment of my later years. With the catastrophe of her decease, commenced another era of my existence—the era of self-denial, patience, sobriety, and resignation. Her example dropped with silent power into my soul, and wrought its preservation. Struck to the earth by the immediate blow, and rising slowly from it, I did not mourn her loss as men are wont to grieve at the departure of all they hold most dear. Think when I would of her, in the solemn watches of the night, in the turmoil of the bustling day—a saint beatified, a spirit of purity and love—

hovered above me, smiling in its triumphant bliss, and whispering——peace. My lamentation was intercepted by my joy. And so throughout. Have I been irritated by the small annoyances of the world, her radiant countenance—as it looked sweetly even upon death—has risen to shame and silence my complaint. Repining at my humble lot, her words—that estimated well the value, the nothingness of life compared with life eternal—have spoken the effectual reproof. As we advance in years, the old familiar faces gradually retreat, and fade at length entirely. Forty long years have passed, and on this bright spring morning the gentle Ellen steals upon the lawn, unaltered by the lapse of time. Her slender arm is twined in mine, and her eye fills with innocent delight. Not an hour of age is added to her face, although the century was not yet born when last I gazed upon its meek and simple loveliness. She vanishes. Is it her voice that through the window flows, borne on the bosom of the vernal wind? Angel of Light, I wait thy bidding to rejoin thee!

END OF VOL. III.









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